

A N
ENQUIRY
INTO THE
LEARNING
OF
SHAKESPEARE,
WITH
REMARKS
ON SEVERAL
PASSAGES of his PLAYS.

In a CONVERSATION between
EUGENIUS and NEANDER.

Doctrina V'm promoveat insitam.

HOR.

By PETER WHALLEY, A. B.
Fellow of St. JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

THE following Observations were designed at first, as Matter of Curiosity and Amusement to my self. In reading the Plays of *Shakespeare*, I could not help comparing some Passages, with similar ones in the other Drammatic Writers of the same and subsequent Age. I found they mutually borrowed, and reflected Light upon each other ; and conspired to set the Manners of the Times in a clearer View, than either of them could have done alone. It is with the Customs of a

A 2 Nation

Nation, as it is with Dress : Every Reign almost differs in something from that preceding it. And the Habits of our old *English* Comedy do not vary more from those of the present, than the Wit and Humour, which is always adapted to the Age, is changed from what it was in the Days of our Ancestors.

The Learning of the Poet having been long made a Question, I recollected many parallel Places, which I had taken notice of in the Study of the Classics. Upon bringing them together, I perceived a very manifest Conformity between them ; sufficient in some Measure to persuade one, that *Shakespeare* was more indebted to the Ancients than is commonly imagined. Favourite Prepossessions usually operate very strongly on the Mind ; and Parties of all kinds are seldom satisfied, without pushing their Sentiments to indefensible Extremes. This probably may be the real Case with regard to the Dispute about our Poet. From being thought to have no Learning, he may be represented to have read too much ; or at least to have read more than what may be fairly collected from his Plays. Thus his Advocates, through Excess of Zeal, may destroy that Cause they are desirous to support. Nothing is advanced in the Quotations I have produced, but what struck me

me immediately upon the first reading. It had been an easy Matter to have multiplied Citations ; and to have poured in a Profusion of Learning in Defence of the present Opinion. But I was intirely unwilling to overcharge ; and chose rather to rely on a few Witneses of Credit, than to call in a Multitude of suspected Testimonies.

That *Shakespeare* was not altogether unacquainted with the dead Languages, is plain from the Confession of his Adversaries ; and from the Authority of *Johnson*, who allows him a small Portion both of *Greek* and *Latin*. We may venture to go somewhat further ; and say, that he not only understood those Languages, but that he arrived to a Taste and Elegance of Judgment, particularly in the Latter. Of this the Tragedy of *Hamlet* is an irrefragable Instance.

Saxo, the *Danish* Historian, from whom he took the Plot, is remarkable for a Purity of Style, beyond any other Writer of the Times in which he lived. And the Critics are surprized to find an Author of such Politeness in so rude and ignorant an Age. *Shakespeare* must certainly have read him in the Original ; for no Translation hath been ever yet made
into

into any modern Language. His rejecting certain marvellous Occurrences, which the Historian has inserted from the Traditions of his Countrymen, shews that he not only read him for Information, but that he studied him as a Critic. Though he hath taken from him the Fact of *Hamlet's* counterfeited Madness, and many other Circumstances of the Play, yet he has varied from the Narration in several Incidents. The Addition of the Ghost is probably from his own Imagination; and the Conclusion of the whole is different from the Relation of *Saxo*. If I may be permitted, with Submission, to declare my Sentiment, the *Catastrophe* is exceedingly ill managed, and very unequal to the rest of the Play. It differs as much likewise from the Truth of History, which informs us, that *Hamlet* survived the Usurper, and died a natural Death. But the Departure from an ancient Fact is easily pardoned, when it occasions a fine Distress, or any extraordinary Scene of Action. Yet neither of these, I apprehend, is accomplished by the Death of *Hamlet*.

Upon reviewing my Remarks, which were wrote at a time when the Amusement of Wit are suffered to mingle with other Studies, I found that most of them continued to be
unobserved

unobserved by the Editors of *Shakespeare*; or were not considered in the same Light in which I saw them. Hence I imagined they might probably contain something, which the Admirers of this Author would not be displeased to meet with. I have purposely avoided to make any Alterations in the Text, one or two Instances excepted: For after all that has been offered on this Head, I believe it not impossible to make still some additional Corrections. I would not be understood to include the last Edition, which I denied myself the Pleasure of perusing. If therefore I have any thing in common with that, it arises from the same general Fund of Observation.

It may be necessary, perhaps, to apologize to the Reader, for some Remarks which I have introduced by the way, and for the manner in which this Enquiry is executed; though I would hope that I have mentioned nothing, but what hath some Connection with the Point in view. To the Subject itself, I believe he will have no Exception; especially if he considers what hath been lately published of this kind, by several Reverend and learned Gentlemen. Nor indeed can it reasonably be deemed inconsistent with
any

any Character, to endeavour to illustrate the Writings of a Genius, who is an Honour to Mankind; and who does not more contribute to improve the Head, than to mend the Heart of every thinking Reader.



A N
E N Q U I R Y
I N T O T H E
L E A R N I N G
O F
SHAKESPEARE, &c.

EUGENIUS and *Neander* are two Friends no less endeared to each other by mutual Offices of Kindness, than by an equal Inclination for Learning, and Studies of a politer Taste. The latter lives chiefly in the Country, but always spends some Months of the Winter in Town, the better to diversify the Scene, and enjoy more agreeably the Company of *Eugenius*. Upon coming to his usual Residence in *London*, he hastened the next Morning to the Lodgings of his Friend: He found him at Breakfast in his Chamber, with his common Entertainment of a Book before him. As soon as the first Salutations were over, *Neander* began to enquire about the State of Letters, and what new Performance he was so deeply intent upon. It is a Writer, replied

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Eugenius

Eugenius, we are neither of us unacquainted with, yet I seldom take him into my Hand, but I always meet with something *new*. From the Character you give me, returned *Neander*, I should do an Injury to the supreme Genius, if I did not immediately conclude it to be a Volume of *Shakespeare*. This Author was their common Favourite; of whom *Neander* frequently would say, that he thought him not more the Boast of his Country in particular, than the Glory of human Nature in general. *Eugenius* was going to make Answer, when the other interposed with observing, that he imagined the Merit of *Shakespeare* to be now indisputably owned: And the Fondness of the Public for him he thought was pretty evident, from the various Editions which have been lately published, and the frequent Representations of his Plays upon the Stage. Do you suppose then, said *Eugenius*, that the Nation was ever prejudiced against *Shakespeare*, or had not a proper Relish of his Merit? That is my Sentiment, replied *Neander*; for it seems, methinks, to have happened to some great Authors, as to certain Notions and Opinions in Philosophy: They have been entertained at their first Appearance in the World, with a candid and honourable Reception, but through the popular Caprice they would soon have fallen into Darkeness and Oblivion; if Men of Learning had not arose to recover their Character, and fixed them in universal Credit and Reputation. And this is easily accounted for by the Decline or Perversion of Sense and Taste in one Age, and its Revival Perfection and Improvement in another. Such, in my Apprehension, has been the Fate of *Shakespeare*, with Regard to his several Contemporaries, and his Rivals in Fame and Poetry. The
Age

Age wherein he lived hardly allowed him any Equal, never a Superior ; but that which immediately succeeded began to prefer others to him in its Esteem, and set *Ben. Johnson* and *Beaumont* and *Fletcher* far above him ; so that in Mr. *Dryden's* Time the Plays of these last became the most frequent Entertainments of the Stage ; two of them being usually acted throughout the Year, to one of *Shakespeare's* or *Johnson's*. The Reason of that Prepossession, returned *Eugenius*, is not difficult to find ; for the Court, which in these Cases, commonly gives the Law, was sunk in Indolence and Pleasure. The Morality of *Shakespeare* appeared with too severe a Countenance ; the Form was too solemn and gloomy for the Gaiety of Men of Wit, and was a Kind of Reproof to the Irregularity of their own Conduct. The Conversation of Gentlemen, the Genteelness of their Behaviour and Discourse, and the Extravagance of their Gallantries were much better painted by *Fletcher*, than by any other Poet who wrote before him. The tender and more pleasing Passions were described in a natural and lively Manner ; and a certain Easiness and Pleasantry reigning through the whole, conspired to recommend him to the general Applause. However, as you intimated, the Judgment and Inclination of the present Age declare universally for *Shakespeare* : And this seems to proceed from the Labours of his several Editors ; and from that inimitable Propriety with which his chief Characters are represented by an incomparable Actor, whose excellent Expression is an admirable Comment upon the Plays of our Author.

The Glory of the *English* Drama, continued *Eugenius*, appears to have been carried to its last Perfection by this *Triumvirate* of Bards. You will pardon me, I hope, the Use of this Metaphor, as I consider *Beaumont* and *Fletcher* but as one Writer. What have we that exceeds their easy and graceful Manner, and Sprightliness of Dialogue? Or does any thing surpass the Humour, Correctness, and Regularity of of *Johnson*? What can we conceive more astonishing than the Genius and Imagination of *Shakespeare*? Or can we find him wanting in a single Article which is necessary to compleat the Character of a Dramatic Poet? You seem, *Eugenius*, interrupted *Neander*, to forget the Charge which hath been long brought against him, and your Affection for his Memory will not give you Leave to consider his Deficiency in a Point which is esteemed very material, and accounted a Qualification essentially belonging to a Dramatick Writer: I mean that Want of Reading which he constantly betrays, and a total Ignorance of the learned Languages. This, perhaps, returned *Eugenius*, might possibly proceed from his Concealment of that Excellence, rather than from any real Want of it. Yet I know it hath been misinterpreted into a Crime, and hath been constantly opposed to that Luxuriance of fancy so evident in the Works of *Shakespeare*; and to that extensive Command of Nature, whom he alone, of all Mankind, seems to have had entirely in his own Power. The common Accusation hath been, as you say, that he wanted Learning: Confining, I presume, the Meaning of that Word to an Acquaintance and Intimacy with the dead Languages; yet this is in Effect but a greater Commendation. *Johnson*,
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however, it must be owned, did not think so; not being so naturally learned, he was willing to derive the greatest Honour from his acquired Riches, and the Spoils which he had obtained from the *Greek* and *Latin* Authors: And this was good Policy in him, who, if he wanted not Imagination, was never yet reckoned to have much to spare. He placed his chief Perfection in this Article, the Fashion of the Times concurring to approve it; and what by this Means he detracted from the Sum of *Shakespeare's* Merit, was added to increase his own: For by industriously supporting this Opinion, he intended to secure the Palm to himself. I am rather, interposed *Neander*, inclined to believe, that the Partizans of the two Poets began the Opposition: For considering the honourable Testimony which *Johnson* hath left of his *beloved Shakespeare*, and the Favours he had received from him, I can hardly believe he would be guilty of that Ingratitude to diminish the Reputation of his Benefactor. However the Competition began, it certainly divided the Critics of that Age; and I think that *Johnson* himself hints at it in this Passage from one of his own Plays; "She may censure
 " Poets, and Authors, and Stiles, and compare
 " 'em, *Daniel* with *Spenser*, *Johnson* with the
 " other Youth, and so forth*." But I have often wondered why *Beaumont* and *Fletcher* were never made Parties in this Dispute: For we may perceive as little an Appearance of Familiarity with the Classics in their Plays, as in those of *Shakespeare*.

* *Silent Woman*, Act II. Sc. 2. If this Expression is not thought applicable to *Shakespeare*, he may probably mean *Decker*, between whom and *Johnson* there was a personal Difference.

peare.† As they were Gentlemen of good Families, their Learning perhaps was presumed to be inherent in the Blood, or to descend to them by Inheritance. So obliging a Presumption, interrupted *Eugenius*, smiling, would be of infinite Service to many younger Brothers of this Age, who are frequently complimented by the Courtesy of *England* with some other Qualities, to which they have as slender a Right. And yet you cannot but have observed, that in every Contest of this kind, our Author never wanted Advocates to maintain his Cause. Mr. *Hales* asserted in his Favour, that there was no Subject which any antient Poet had ever treated, but he would engage to shew it as well wrote by *Shakespeare*.

If you were at Leisure, I could point out some parallel Passages tending to confirm this Assertion ; and I would make a previous Enquiry into the several Sources from which the Poet drew Materials to adorn his Plays. But such a Disquisition, continued *Eugenius*, would, I fear, demand more time than you can probably allow me ; for undoubtedly you have many Compliments and Services from the Country to deliver, which the Ceremony of the Town must be obliged with at your first Arrival. What little Matters of that Kind, replied *Neander*, I have to do, are dispatching by a Servant ; and I have *dealt* out my *Cards*, I hope, with so much Art, as to secure me your Company, if

† *Fletcher* might have properly been joined with *Shakespeare*, for never blotting out a Line, which we are informed of by good Authority. " Whatever I have seen of Mr. *Fletcher*'s own Hand, is free from Interlining ; and his Friends " affirm he never writ any one Thing twice." *Mosely's* Pref. to Edit. 1647.

disengaged for the rest of the Day. I have no particular Appointment, returned *Eugenius*, to call me out, and, with your Leave, we may employ the rest of the Morning in our present Conversation. *Neander* acknowledging his Inclination, *Eugenius* proceeded in the following Manner.

Shakespeare has been deservedly esteemed the *Homer*, the Father of our Dramatic Poetry, as being the most irresistible Master of the Passions; possessed of the same creative Power of Imagination; abounding with a vast Assemblage of Ideas, and a rich Redundancy of Genius and Invention. And I think, added *Neander*, that he may be considered to deserve that Title in another Light, as having, like him, furnished many Poets and Tragedians of succeeding Times with the noblest Images and Thoughts.

*Cujusque ex ore profusos
Omnis posteritas latices in Carmina duxit,
Annemque in tenues ausa est deducere rivos,
Unius fecunda bonis.* MANIL.

However, with all these Superiorities, and with a Dignity equal to the divinest of the Ancients, he had the Fortune to resemble them in the least desirable Part of their Circumstances; as he met with the Fatality, peculiar almost to distinguished Writers, of being transmitted to Posterity full of Errors and Corruptions. It would appear almost incredible, that the Writings of an Author of so late a Date, should be thus extremely faulty and incorrect; and that his Works, like the Province of *Africa* to the ancient *Romans*, should yield his

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Commentators such a continual Harvest of Victory and Triumphs ; but it happens at the same time, to prevent all Surprise, that we are not only assured of the Fact, but in some measure likewise both of the Cause and Manner of it. This then being the Case, returned *Eugenius*, can it be any longer a Wonder why certain Adventurers in Criticism have so ardent an Esteem for *Shakespeare*, when he gives them the most delightful Opportunity of trying their Skill upon his Plays, and of indulging a Disposition for Guesses and Conjecture, the darling Passion of our modern Critics. Besides the Correctness of the Text, which is equally necessary to the right understanding him in common with all other Authors ; it may not be improper to consider a few Particulars, which may possibly explain the Singularity of some Places, and give us a little Insight into the Learning of *Shakespeare*.

To begin with his Plots, the Ground-work and Basis of the whole : These are usually taken from some History or Novel ; he follows the Thread of the Story as it lies before him, and seldom makes any Addition or Improvement to the Incidents arising from it : He copies the old Chronicles almost *verbatim*, and gives a faithful Relation of the several Characters they have left us of our Kings and Princes. It is needless to remark, how erroneous this must render the Plan of his Drama, and what Violation it must necessarily offer to the Unities, as prescribed by *Aristotle*. Yet it does not in the least abate my Veneration for our Poet, that the *French Connoisseurs* have fixed on him the Imputation of Ignorance and Barbarism. It would agree, I believe, as little with their Tempers to be freed from a sovereign Authority in the

the Empire of Wit and Letters, as in their civil Government. An absolute Monarch must preside over Affairs of Science, as well as over those of the Cabinet ; and it is pleasant enough to observe what Pain they are put to, upon the least Appearance of offending against the Laws of the *Stagyrite*. But notwithstanding the Imperfection, and even the Absurdity of the Plots of *Shakespeare*, he continues unrivaled for his masterly Expression of the Characters and Manners ; and the proper Execution of these is undoubtedly more useful, and perhaps more conducive to the Ends of Tragedy, than the Design and Conduct of the Plot. A great Part of this unjustifiable Wildness of the Fable, must be placed to the Taste and Humour of the Times ; the People had been used to the Marvellous and Surprising in all their Shews and Sports ; they had seen different Kingdoms, in different Quarters of the World, engaged in the same Scene of Business, and could not be hastily confined from so unlimited a Latitude to a narrower Compass. I allow their Appetites to have been much depraved ; yet probably some kind of *Regimen*, not very different from what they were before accustomed to, was the properest Method to bring them to a better. Nevertheless, were we to make a Dissection of his Plays, we should discover more Art and Judgment than we are commonly aware of, both in the Contrast and Consistency of his principal Characters, and in the different Under-parts, which are all made subservient towards carrying on the main Design ; and we should observe, that still there was a Simplicity of Manner, which Nature only can give,

and as wonderful a Diversity. *Homer* is admired for that Perfection of Beauty which represents Men as they are affected in Life, and shews us in the Persons of others, the Oppositions of Inclination, and the Struggles between the Passions of Self-love, and those of Honour and Virtue, which we often feel in our own Breasts *. This is that Excellence for which he is deservedly admired, as much as for the Variety of his Characters. May we not apply this Remark with an equal Propriety to *Shakespeare*, in whom we find as surprizing a Difference, and as natural and distinct a Preservation of his Characters? And is not this agreeable Display of Genius, interposed *Neander*, infinitely preferable to that studied Regularity and lifeless Drawing practised by our latter Poets? in whom we meet with either a constant Resemblance, or Antithesis both of Scenes and Persons; the natural Result of a confined and scanty Imagination! I am tempted to compare such Performances to that perpetual Sameness or Repetition which prevails in our modern Taste of Gardens: Where,

*Grove nods at Grove, each Ally has a Brother,
And half the Plat-form just reflects the other †.*

Yet I believe, however earnestly we contend for Nature, that we are neither of us inclined to exclude the Direction of Art from interposing in the Drama: It gives a heightning and *Relief* to Nature, and at the same time curbs the extravagance of Fancy, and circumscribes it

* See *Hutcheson's Inquiry*, &c. P. 41.

† Mr. *Pope's* Epistles to Lord *Burlington*, V. 115.

within

within proper Bounds. All I would establish by this Remark, is the Opinion of *Longinus*, preferring a Composition with some Faults of this kind, which is wrote with Genius and Sublimity, to one of greater Regularity and Correctness, that is not animated with equal Life and Spirit. The Business and Design of Art, returned *Eugenius*, is undoubtedly to polish and improve the Beauties of Nature; and in some Cases, perhaps, it may be a more illustrious Mark of Skill, not to weaken and destroy a natural Grace, than to introduce an artificial one. Rules may probably assist and set off a Genius, tho' they can never give Perfection where that is wanting: But we seem, *Neander*, to justify our Principles by our Practice. It is reasonable we should now return to our Subject, from which we have been long wandering, as I have something to observe which hath a natural Connection with the Point we are discussing.

You must have remarked, I think, that the Poet himself was sensible of the Imperfections of his Plots, and of the Folly of the Multitude which he was obliged to comply with against his Knowledge; for he attempts in many Places to apologize for his Weakness, and reflects severely upon the Judgment of his Audience.* Sir *Philip Sidney* sometime before him had condemned the Ignorance and Faults of many Poets, and their notorious Violations of the Unities, in the De-

* Particularly in the Prologue, and Chorusses of *Henry* the 5th, and in the Prologue to *Henry* the 8th.

figs and Management of their Fable. As I have the Book at hand, you will permit me to read the Passage. “ You shall have *Asia*, “ says he, of the one Side, and *Afric* of the “ other; and so many other under King- “ doms, that the Player, when he comes in, “ must ever begin with telling you where he “ is, or else the Tale will not be conceived. “ Now you shall have three Ladies walk to “ gather Flowers, and then we must believe “ the Stage to be a Garden. By-and-by we “ hear News of a Ship-wreck in the same “ Place, then we are to blame if we accept “ it not for a Rock.—Now of Time they “ are much more liberal; for ordinary it is, “ that two young Princes fall in Love; “ after many Traverses she is got with Child, “ delivered of a fair Boy, he is lost, groweth “ a Man, falleth in Love, and is ready to get “ another Child; and all this in two Hours “ space, which how absurd it is in Sense, even “ Sense may imagine.”* If I might suppose, added *Eugenius*, that Sir *Philip*, in this Criticism, alluded to any particular Performance, it is probable that he hints at *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, which abounds with many such palpable Absurdities; and is in the Number of those spurious Pieces, which are attributed to *Shakespeare*: If this Conjecture be admitted, it may be considered likewise as a Proof of that Play’s being none of his; but as I lay no great Stress upon the Thought, I shall not claim your Thanks for the Discovery.

* *Defence of Poesy*, p. 43. 3d. Vol. of his Works.

The next Instance of the Poet's Understanding and Art, is in forming the Characters and Manners. In this Field *Shakespeare* is confessedly invincible; for it is not easy to frame any Idea of a more comprehensive Mind, or of an exacter Knowledge of the World, than what he displays upon this Head. It is his singular Excellence to mark every Character in the strongest manner, with Sentiments peculiarly correspondent, and to maintain the Propriety of each in every Circumstance of Action. Even those which appear to be the most uniform, and of the same Complexion, will be found, upon a nearer View, to be totally and formally different. The Diversity of these is as great as that of his Comparisons and Similies; for in short he has no two alike; they are as distinct from each other, as one Man is from a second in real Life. The Diction also is proportionably varied, and adapted to the Rank and Circumstances of the Speaker. He every where discovers a perfect Intimacy with the antient poetic Story, which he always introduceth by the justest Application. Nor does he appear less knowing in Philosophy, History, Mechanics, and many other Branches of abstruser Learning. He seems, indeed, interrupted *Neander* with a Smile, to be acquainted with the several Kinds of Science to so great a Degree, that were all Arts to be lost, they might be recovered with as little Difficulty from the Plays of *Shakespeare*, as from the *Iliad* of *Homer*, or the *Georgics* of *Virgil*.

Your mentioning these antient Authors, replied *Eugenius*, reminds me of the Resemblance

blance which there is between the Plays of *Shakespeare*, and the Comedians and Satyrists of Antiquity ; as I apprehend the Difficulty of understanding both, commonly proceeds from the same Causes : An Allusion familiar enough to every Body at the time of writing, may be irretrievably lost ; and what Perplexity this must necessarily occasion, is extremely obvious. I am apt to imagine there is a great deal of concealed Satire in the Plays of our Author, and frequently in those Places where we least expect it. For it is evident, I think, that many Reflections of this kind, on the marvellous Performances of the Writers of that Age, and on the Humours and Opinions of the Times, are interspersed in Numbers of his Scenes. And as these have commonly little or no Connection with the Plot and Incidents, they receive their chief Grace and Beauty from the Characters who speak, or the Application they are put to. Hence is it that we often find his Clowns or Fools repeating Passages from Plays well known to the Audience of that Age, with a View to ridicule and expose them. And thus, as it were by a kind of Transmutation, what was originally Folly and Stupidity, becomes Wit and Humour by the Parody of *Shakespeare*.

This last Remark which you have made, returned *Neander*, confirms a Notion which I have long entertained of *Ben Johnson*, whom I conceive to be far the most obscure of any of our Dramatic Poets ; and I dare say you will heartily join with me in a Wish I have frequently made, that some Gentleman of Learning

Learning would oblige the Public with a correct Edition of his Works, attended with explanatory Notes in their proper Places. Abundance of Allusions occur in his Writings, both to the Customs of his own Age, and to those of Antiquity ; which being often very remote, darken the Sentiments to so great a degree, that we have as much Perplexity almost in reading him, as we meet with in *Aristophanes* or *Plautus*. *Terence* I am sure is infinitely easier, tho' a Man would not expect to see greater Difficulties in an Author of his own Country, who died but a Century ago, than in another who wrote in a foreign Language, and hath been dead near twenty times as long. These Difficulties, replied *Eugenius*, are owing in a great Measure to his Learning : He formed himself upon the antient Models, and hath copied as well their Manner as Expression. We have not, I confess, in *Shakespeare*, such direct and visible Traces of Antiquity ; and for the same Reason we are free from that Obscurity, which this extravagant Affectation hath created in the other.

We have seen, *Neander*, he continued, what Methods were taken by the Poet to be severe upon his Adversaries, or to lash the prevailing Follies with an honest Indignation. And we may further observe that he made use of the same Occasions to pay a Compliment, or to ingratiate himself with more address in the Favour of his Friends and Patrons. It is easy to perceive with what a religious Veneration he constantly speaks of the Majesty of Kings ; and to what Height he advanceth their Prerogative

rogative and Power. This, I suppose, was in some Measure the Effect of Complaisance, to inculcate on the People those high strained Notions of the regal Dignity in which King *James I.* had been educated, and which he endeavoured to persuade others into a Belief of by his own Writings. I shall instance in two Passages from *Shakespeare*, which may serve to confirm the Hint which I have made; the first of them is to be found in his Play of *Richard II.* and runs thus :

*Not all the Water in the rough rude Sea
Can wash the Balm from an anointed King :
The Breath of worldly Men cannot depose
The Deputy elected by the Lord.*

Act III. Sc. 2.

The Second which is full to the same Purpose occurs in *Hamlet*.

————— *Do not fear our Person :
There's such DIVINITY doth hedge a King,
That Treason can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of its Will.*

Act IV. Sc. 6.

If we look into other Poets of the same Age, we shall find the like Sentiments delivered in an equal Strain; and the following Passage will evince that *Beaumont* and *Fletcher* did not come much short of him in idolizing kingly Power :

King. *Draw not thy Sword, thou know'st I
cannot fear
A Subjects Hand.*

Amintor.

Amintor.

There is
 DIVINITY about you, that strikes dead
 My rising Passions.

Maid's Trag. Act. III.

This Proceeding however of our Poet, returned *Neander*, is more easily excusable in him, if we consider how great a Mark of Esteem and Honour he received from King *James* himself, who is reported to have wrote, with his own Hand, an amicable Letter to Mr. *Shakespeare*; which Letter, tho' now lost, remained long in the Possession of Sir *William D'avenant*. By attending to these Circumstances, and others of the same Kind, pursued *Eugenius*, we may be enabled, perhaps, to form a Judgment at what Time several of his Plays were wrote. The Date, indeed, of some is already determined by many external Evidences; and the internal ones of others may support us in a probable Conjecture of the Time of their first Appearance on the Stage.

As it is evident from what hath been said, that *Shakespeare* framed the Sentiments of his Plays in Conformity to the Notions then in vogue, and made his Kings and Counsellors speak the Language of the Court; so he drew Descriptions and Images from the Entertainments most in use, and borrowed Metaphors from the Diversions practised by Men of Birth and Quality. This lets us into the Reason why we have such frequent mention of Hawking, Hunting, Archery, and the like. Falconry in particular was a favourite Diversion of that Age; and the Poet seems equally fond

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to illustrate his Thoughts by Allusions to that before the rest. A Passage in *Othello* is composed of Metaphors, which are all entirely so many Terms in Hawking :

————— *If I prove her Haggard,
Tho' that her Jesses were my dear Heart-strings,
I'd whistle her off, and let her down the Wind
To prey at Fortune.* Act III. Sc. 6.

He discovers himself in these Lines a perfect Master of the Sport, as indeed he always does of every thing which he occasionally introduces in a Play : And every thing, added *Neander*, which he takes upon him to describe, appears to receive, in my Judgment, an uncommon Lustre and Polish ; and to be endued with more delicate and softer *Traits* of Beauty, than I often find in the Things themselves. Every Description is a capital Piece of Painting ; and sometimes even a single Line contains almost the Beauties of a whole Landscape. Thus you may observe, resumed *Eugenius*, that he is equally excellent in his Imagery of hunting ; for which I might appeal to so inimitable a Description of a Pack of Hounds, that there is scarce a Country 'Squire in the Nation, who hath heard of the Name of *Shakespeare*, but can repeat it entirely by Heart. The Place which I refer to, is to be found in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act IV. Sc. 2. and we may add to it the following one from *Titus Andronicus*.

Tamora

*Tamora. The Birds chaunt Melody on every Bush,
 The Snake lies rolled in the chearful Sun,
 The green Leaves quiver with the cooling Wind,
 And make a chequer'd Shadow on the Ground :
 Under their sweet Shade, Aaron, let us sit,
 And whilst the babbling Echo mocks the Hounds,
 Replying shrilly to the well-tun'd Horns,
 As if a double Hunt were heard at once,
 Let us sit down, and mark their yelling Noise.*

Act II. Sc. 3.

The Lines which you have quoted, interposed *Neander*, are taken, I perceive, from a Performance very unequal in itself; it was despised by the Contemporaries of the Poet, and is conceived upon the Whole, not to have been wrote by him. The Absurdity and Confusion of the Plot, returned *Eugenius*, together with the Meanness of many Parts in this Play, and the Contempt which *Ben Johnson* openly expressed of it, when *Shakespeare* was yet living, are good Reasons to suppose that all of it did not come from him. Yet the above-mentioned Verses, which were wrote by the most lively Imagination, and others which might be easily produced, are, I think, a sufficient Evidence that they could possibly proceed from no other Hand than his. The Vices of the swelling or low Speeches, are redeemed by the Virtues of those which are more natural and simple: It may probably be his first Performance in the dramatic Way, because we are certain it was in Being when the Poet was arrived but to the 25th Year of his Age. The distinguishing Parts of the Play are intirely descriptive; and might, perhaps, be the ruder Essays of

that amazing Genius which could pervade all Nature with a Glance, and to whom nothing within the Limits of this Universe appeared to be unknown : Or if we allow it to be only fitted up for the Stage by him with the Addition of these Passages ; I fancy it must have been prepared sometime at least before the Death of Queen *Elizabeth*. I found my Conjecture on those Lines of it, which relate to Hunting, as I imagine that Incident might have been introduced for the following Reason. We are informed, that Mr. *Richard Edwards*, who, in the Beginning of that Reign, was one of the Gentlemen of her Majesty's Chapel, had a Comedy called *Palamon and Arcite* represented before her at *Oxford* ; in which the Cry of a Pack of Hounds was so naturally imitated, that the Queen and Audience were extremely delighted with it.* This Circumstance might raise the Emulation of succeeding Poets, most of whom wrote only to the Eyes and Ears ; and excite in them a Desire to obtain the Favour of the Queen by a Repetition or Improvement of the same agreeable Artifice. You seem, *Eugenius*, returned *Neander*, to adjudge this Play to *Shakespeare*, and suppose either the Whole, or the Passages inserted, to be his first Compositions ; because such florid and gay Descriptions are the natural Result of a youthful and warm Imagination. I might observe the same in the most poetical and lively Parts of *Romeo and Juliet*, which was brought upon the Stage when the Poet was about 33 Years old. I cannot omit intimating, that the generality of the Verses in

* *Wood's Athenæ Oxoniens.*

Titus Andronicus are remarkably easy and flowing ; and that there are as many Allusions in it to the Customs, History, and Events of Antiquity, as in any other of his Plays whatsoever. Take it however, resumed *Eugenius*, for all in all, I perceive no great Reason why we should interest ourselves in its Defence ; and it may be thought sufficiently honoured with the little Share of Reputation it possesseth, from the Supposition only of its being wrote by *Shakespeare*.

The next Particular which demands your Notice, as it was undoubtedly designed by the Poet, who is followed in it both by *Johnson* and *Fletcher*, is the Censure and Ridicule he hath expressed on the senseless Custom of Duelling. This very much prevailed in those Days ; and was reduced to a Science, necessary to be understood, by all Gentlemen of Honour, in the Time of King *James I.* There is a remarkable Hint of it in *Romeo and Juliet*, which being one of his first Plays, it is probable that this Practice was then common, tho' not so notorious as it grew to be afterwards. For thus *Mercutio* ridicules it in his Character of *Tybalt* ; “ Oh, he is the courageous Captain
 “ of Compliments ; he fights as you sing
 “ Prick-songs : Keeps Time, Distance, and
 “ Proportion ; rests his Minum, one, two,
 “ and the third in your Bosom. The very
 “ Butcher of a Silk Button, a Duellist, a Du-
 “ ellist, &c.” And the frivolous Occasion of their Quarrels is described with the same satirical Humour, *Mercut.* “ Nay, an there were
 “ two such, we should have none shortly, for
 “ one

“ one would kill the other : Thou ! why thou
 “ wilt quarrel with a Man that hath a Hair
 “ more, or a Hair less in his Beard than thou
 “ hast, &c.” Act III. Sc. 1. And again, in
Timon of Athens he thus shews his Indignation
 against it.

*Your Words have took such Pains, as if they labour'd
 To bring Man-slaughter into form, and set quarrelling
 Upon the Head of Valour, which indeed
 Is Valour misbegot, and came into the World
 When Sects and Factions were but newly born.*

Act III. Sc. 6.

These Lines are an open Declaration against
 the Humour of Duelling ; and a perfect Image
 of the Times in which so barbarous a Practice
 had its rise. I must add to these Instances one
 more ; it is expressive of the whole Form and
 Ceremony observed upon such Occasions, and
 precisely regulates the several Degrees and
 Measures of a Quarrel. It occurs in the Sixth
 Scene of the last Act of *As you Like it* ; and
 makes the Conversation between *Jaqes* and
 the *Clown*. The Whole is an admirable Scene
 of Humour and Satire, but the last Speech is
 more particularly diverting. *Clown*. “ O Sir,
 “ we quarrel in print by the Book, as you
 “ have Books for good Manners. I will name
 “ you the Degrees, &c,” And if we look
 into any of *Ben Johnson's* Comedies, we shall
 be further convinced how prevalent this Hu-
 mour was, from that Eagerness which his
 Cullies discover to be instructed in the Art ;
 and the Precepts which his Bully-Captains lay
 down in their Lessons to their Pupils. This

is marked with great Perspicuity in the Characters of *Stephen, Matthew, and Capt. Bobadill*, in *Every Man in his Humour*. . And it is *Sogliardo's* Account of his Friend, Cavalier *Shift*, " That he manages a Quarrel the best " that ever you saw, for Terms and Circumstances."* To the same Purpose *Subtle*, in the *Alchemist*, promises to give *Kastrill* the most ample Directions in the Science :

*I'll have you to my Chamber of Demonstrations,
Where I'll shew you both the Grammar and Logic,
And Rethoric of Quarrelling : My whole Method
Drawn out in Tables ; and my Instrument,
That hath the several Scales upon't, shall make you
Able to quarrel at a Straw's Breadth by Moon-light.*

Act IV. Sc. 2.

And again, in *Fletcher's King and no King*, the Ridicule is admirably maintained in the Character of *Bessus* ; who being engaged to two Hundred and twelve, protested he could not fight above three Combats a Day. And his Observations upon the Form of the Challenges are incomparably humorous. " If, " says he, they would find me Challenges thus " thick, as long as I lived, I would have no " other Living : I can make seven Shillings a " Day of the Paper to the Grocers : Yet I " learn nothing by all these but a little Skill " in comparing of Stiles. I do find evidently, " that there is some one Scrivener in this " Town that has a great Hand in writing of " Challenges, for they are all of a Cut, and " six of them in a Hand ; and they all end,

* *Every Man out of his Humour*, Act IV. Sc. 6.

" my

“ my Reputation is dear to me, and I must
 “ require Satisfaction.” *Act* III. If this last
 Remark, which you have pointed out, inter-
 posed *Neander*, stood in need of any Confirma-
 tion, I would beg Leave to corroborate it by
 a Speech of my Lord *Bacon*. I observe you
 have his Works in your Collection, and I will
 take the Liberty to read you an Extract or two
 from it, as it was made expressly upon this
 Subject of Duelling. “ I thought, says he,
 “ to lose no Time in a Mischief that groweth
 “ every Day ; and besides it passes not amiss,
 “ sometimes in Government, that the greater
 “ Sort be admonished by an Example made
 “ in the Meaner, and the Dog to be beaten
 “ before the Lyon. Nay, I should think, my
 “ Lords, that Men of Birth and Quality will
 “ leave the Practice when it begins to be vili-
 “ fied, and come so low as to *Barber-Surgeons*,
 “ and *Butchers*, and such base mechanical
 “ Persons.—This Offence expressly gives
 “ the Law an Affront, as if there were two
 “ Laws ; one a kind of *Gown Law*, and the
 “ other a Law of *Reputation*, as they term it.
 “ So that *Paul’s* and *Westminster*, the Pulpit
 “ and the Courts of Justice, must give Place
 “ to the Law, (as the King speaketh in his
 “ Proclamation) of *Ordinary* Tables, and such
 “ reverend Assemblies : The Year-Books and
 “ Statute-Books must give Place to some
 “ *French* and *Italian* Pamphlets, which han-
 “ dle the Doctrine of Duels ; which if they be
 “ in the Right, *transeamus ad Illa*, let us re-
 “ ceive them, and not keep the People in
 “ Distraction between two Laws*.”

* Charge against Duels in the Star Chamber, 4 Vol. of
 his Works, p. 298.

I find,

I find, added *Eugenius*, that his Lordship and the Poet both concur in assigning the same Cause for so unnatural a Custom. It proceeded from the Inclination remarkable in the *English*, to transplant the Follies and Vices of those Countries they were used to visit for Improvement; and these coming always into a kindly Soil, thrived with a wonderful Increase. *Italy* was at this time the School of Gentility and Manners; and our travelled Sparks continually returned home infected with strange Customs, which met with a very quick Reception among the rest of their Countrymen. This is intimated to us by *Shakespeare* in several Places, who blames their Degeneracy in that respect, and their perpetual listening to

*Report of Fashions in proud Italy ;
Whose Manners still our tardy apish Nation,
Limps after in base awkward Imitation.*

RICH'D. II. ACT II. SC. I.

What Airs they commonly affected upon finishing their *Tours*, we may collect from the Passage I am now going to mention. " Fare-
" well, Monsieur Traveller; look you liip,
" and wear strange Suits; disable all the Be-
" nefits of your own Country; *be out of love*
" *with your Nativity, and almost chide God for*
" *making you that Countenance you are, or I*
" will scarce think you have swam in a Gon-
" dola *." Was I disposed, replied *Neander*,
to refine upon this Quotation, I might venture
to affirm, that the Poet was particularly cen-
suring that Libertinism of Opinion which his

* *As you like it*, ACT IV. Scene 2.

E

Country-

Countrymen contracted of their *Italian* Pedagogues. The Thought is plainly atheistical, and a kind of Libel against Providence; exactly of the same Stamp with those which *Vanini* expresses in several Places of his Treatise *de admirandis Naturæ, &c.* I can give you a very remarkable Example, if my Memory does not refuse me its Assistance. St. *Paul*, he says, having bestowed on Marriage the Name of a Sacrament, and exhorted Husbands to love their Wives, as *Christ* hath loved his Church; married Persons, in Consequence of this Precept, form too pure and spiritual an Idea of the Nuptial Bed. That as they acquit themselves of the Conjugal Duties only from a Principle of Religion, their Children become heavy and stupid, and that by Means of the Imagination of their Parents; in the same manner as we see Infants born with exterior Marks, which are attributed to the Fancy and Imagination of the Mother. He laments it as a Misfortune that he was the Issue of lawful Wedlock; supposing that his Father did not beget him with that Gust and Ardour which attends an illegitimate Concurrence: Yet he comforts himself, that his Mother was in the Bloom and Vigour of her Youth when he was born, tho' his Father was seventy Years old. And he imputes to those Circumstances all the good Qualities both of Mind and Body, which his Vanity suggested he was Master of. “ Quod si excelsus nunc mihi est animus
 “ grata forma, corpusque paucis obnoxium infirmitatibus, inde evenit quod Pater meus et si
 “ senex, blandus tamen atque hilaris erat;
 “ ejusque ob senium frigescentia membra (irrident

“ dent philosophi hæc Christianorum con-
 “ nubia) adolescentula uxor complexu fove-
 “ bat. Quin imo moderate vino concalefac-
 “ tus, ad Veneris comœdiam peragendam se
 “ accinxit, amœnissimo illo anni tempore quo
 “ se omnes naturæ vires exerunt *.”

There is likewise another Folly, returned *Eugenius*, proceeding from the same Source ; this is the frequent use of many finical and dainty Oaths, which the choice Spirits of that Age distinguished themselves by, as those of the present by their Blasphemy and Profaneness. *Shakespeare*, I think, insinuates as much, when *Rosalind* questions the Clown, who swore by his *Honour*, where he learned that Oath, who tells her of a certain Knight who used to swear so ; and though he swore falsely, yet was he not forsworn, *Hotspur* indeed, more agreeably to his Character, would have his Lady, who had protested *in good sooth*, to leave those Terms, and swear in the true military manner,

*Sware me, Kate, like a Lady as thou art,
 A good Mouth-filling Oath.*

First Part Hen. IV. Act III. Sc. 3.

For as a Soldier, he was equally full of strange Oaths, and sudden and quick in Quarrel. The same Humour is described with great Life in almost every Comedy of *Ben Johnson's* ; and it is his Character of one Person, that the Oaths

* *Dialog. de Arcanis Naturæ*, p. 321, 322, & 354,
 355.

which he vomits at one Supper, would maintain a Town of Garrison in good swearing a Twelvemonth.

To this we may join that other Privilege of a Traveller, twin-born with swearing; which is, a happy Talent of lying; familiar enough to those Men of Fire, who looked on every one graver than themselves, as their *Whetstone*. This you may remember is a proverbial Term, denoting an Excitement to lying, or a Subject that gave a Man the Opportunity of breaking a Jest upon another. And thus *Shakespeare* makes *Celia* reply to *Rosalind* upon the Entry of the Clown, "Fortune hath sent this natural
" for our *Whetstone*; for always the Dulness
" of the Fool is the *Whetstone* of the Wits." And *Johnson* alluding to the same, when he draws the Character of *Amorphus*, says, "He
" will lie cheaper than any Beggar, and
" louder than most Clocks; for which he is
" right properly accommodated to the *Whet-*
" *stone* his Page."

I observed in the Beginning of our Conversation, pursued *Eugenius*, that many Passages are discovered in the Poet to be designed with a double Intention. They are proper and consistent, if considered as natural in the Character where they are used; and have likewise the Force of a strong and well wrote Satire upon particular Affairs or Persons remarkable at the time of their Appearance. Of this kind is the counterfeited Madness of *Edgar* in the Tragedy of *Lear*; whose wild, grotesque, and
incoherent

incoherent Sentiments, are intirely such as we should conceive a Lunatic of that Turn would utter : And they are further designed to ridicule an Imposture discovered about that time, in which the several Fiends mentioned by the Poet were raised up to carry on the Cheat. And, perhaps, the Character of the Fool is not altogether free from particular Satire and Reflection; as where he says, I will speak a *Prophecy* or two before I go. He may hint at certain Forgeries of that kind which were newly coined by the *Papists*; for the Jesuits of that Age were able Conjurers and Seers, and had Oracles upon every Occasion ready cut and dry, tho' they met with the Fate of their Devils, and became the Sport of the Populace, and Entertainment of the Stage. I have seen a Book relating to this Subject, intituled, *Admirable and notable Prophecies uttered by twenty-four Roman Catholics*, by one *James Maxwell*, printed in 1615, the Year before our Poet died †.

More

† It may not be impertinent to observe, that the Conclusion of the second Prophecy, is an undoubted Ridicule upon the manner in which those Forgeries were uttered; and, in particular, upon the Prophecies which were put out under the Name of *Merlin*.

*Then shall the Realm of Albion
Come to great Confusion.*

" This Prophecy *Merlin* shall make; for I do live before his 'Time.'" Act II. Sc. 3.

Bishop *Hall* in his *Virgidemiarum* alludes to the same Practice, and gives us a Prophecy which seems in a great measure accomplished.

Lo

More Examples of the same nature might be easily alledged, but I shall chuse to proceed to those which are a Sneer upon his Fellow-Writers. In the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, you may recollect that we are presented with the lamentable Comedy of *Pyramus* and *Thisbe*; and though the Fustian and Blunders of it may seem well enough to agree with the Capacities of the Actors, I rather imagine that many of the Lines are either taken from some Poets of those Days, or wrote in Imitation of their Style. The Productions of the Writers in the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, were miserably over-run with unnatural and far-fetched Sentiments, which was owing to a servile Fondness for the *Italian* Authors, and the foolish Imitation of their Thoughts and Manner; yet I must own at the same time, there flourished many excellent Models for a truer and better Taste in Composition. What contributed not a little to corrupt the Judgment of the Age, were the Plays and Romances of *Lilly*. These were a perfect Magazine of Affectation and Conceit. He was at the Head of all the *Beaux Esprits*, followed by the Gentlemen

*To the long Date of these expired Days,
Which the inspired Merlin's Word foretells;
When Dunghill Peasants shall be dight as Kings,
Then one Confusion another brings.*

L. III. Sat. 1.

As I shall have Occasion to mention this very uncommon Performance of *Bishop Hall* in another place, the Reader may expect to find a more particular Account of it there.

Sonnetteers

Sonnetteers, and easy Writers of every Denomination. Among the several Tricks practised by the greater Part of these Poets we may observe that a continual *Alliteration* runs through the Verses of them all, which was often carried to the highest Pitch of Affectation. This is very evident from many of the Tragedies, and Translations of the *Latin* Classics which were made in those Times; and *Shakespeare*, together with the rest of the more judicious Critics, appears to ridicule it by these following Lines in the Play last mentioned.

*Whereat with Blade, with bloody blameful Blade
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody Breast.*

I question, returned *Neander*, smiling, if the great Admirer of the *most excellent Erythræus*,* would easily forgive so insolent an Attack upon one of his favourite Arts of Verse; which he has asserted to compose in a great measure the Music and Harmony of Poetry. The proper and due Use of it, replied *Eugenius*, adds undoubtedly much Delicacy and Sweetness to a Poem; but this perpetual Repetition of the same Letter, is a sort of childish Diversion; and if the Merit of a Piece consisted in that alone, many a great Author would be obliged to change Places with his Inferior; the *Plaudite porcelli porcorum pigra Propago* † would

* See *Letters on Poetical Translations, and on Milton's and Virgil's Arts of Verse.*

† This is the first Line of a Latin Poem intitled, *Pugna Porcorum*, consisting of about 350 Verses, every Word of which begins with the Letter *P*.

stand a good Chance to be equalled with the
Æneid *.

I could

* If it should not be agreed, that *Shakespeare* intended to ridicule this affected Alliteration in the Verses above cited, it will be readily acknowledged, I believe, that he purposely designed it in what follows :

“ *Hol.* Sir *Nathaniel*, will you hear an extemporal Epitaph on the Death of the Deer? And to humour the Ignorant, I have called the Deer the Princess killed, a Pricket.

“ *Nath.* Perge, good Master *Holofernes*, perge; so it shall please you to abrogate Scurrility.

“ *Hol.* I will something affect the Letter, for it argues Facility.”

“ *The praiseful Princess pierc'd and prickt,*

“ *A pretty pleasing Pricket, &c.*

Love's Lab. lost, Act IV. Sc. 2.

This Excess of Fondness for the *Italian* Poets, is taken notice of by other Writers in the same Age. Sir *Philip Sidney* has exposed it with some Satire, in his *Astrophel* and *Stella*.

“ *You that do Dictionary's Method bring*

“ *Into your Rhymes, running in rattling Rows;*

“ *You, that poor Petrarch's long deceased Woes*

“ *With new-born Sighs, and denizen'd Wit do sing.*

Stanz. XV.

Where we may remark, that this conceited Affectation of the Letter is likewise censured by him, not without Reason; and Bishop *Hall* has the following Comparison, taken from this reigning Practice :

“ *Or an, Hos Ego, from old Petrarch's Spright*

“ *Unto a Plagiary Sonnet-wright* L. IV. Sat. 2,

And

I could never bring myself to submit to the
Drudgery of going through many of our an-
cient

And ridiculing a sorry Poet, under the Name of *Labeo*, he
refers again to the common Custom of the Tribe :

“ *He can implore the Heathen Deities,
To guide his bold and busy Enterprize ;
Or filch whole Pages at a Clap for Need
From honest Petrarch, clad in English Weed.
While big But Oh’s each Stanza can begin,
Whose Trunke and Tayle sluttish, and hartlesse bin.*
L. VI. Sat. 1.

Having promised the Reader a more particular Character
of these Satires above, I take this Opportunity of being
as good as my Word with him, and of introducing him
to a more general Acquaintance with one of the most curi-
ous Pieces of our *English* Poetry. It is intitled, “*Virgide-*
“ *miarum*, Six Bookes. First three Bookes of Toothles
“ Satyres,

1. Poeticall.
2. Academicall.
3. Morall.

London, printed by *Thomas Creede*, for *Robert Dexter*, 1597.”

The second Part was published the Year after, with this
Title, “*Virgidemiarum*, The three last Bookes of byting
Satyres.”

Imprinted at *London*, by *Richard Bradocke* for *Robert
Dexter*, at the Signe of the brazen Serpent in *Paules Church
Yarde*, 1598.

Bishop Hall was born in 1574, and, publishing these
Satires twenty-three Years after, was, as he himself asserts,
in the Prologue, the first Satyrift in the *English* Language :

*In the first Adventure with fool-hardy Might
To tread the Steps of perilous Despight ;
I first adventure, follow me who list,
And be the second English Satyrift.*

cient Plays, or, in all Probability, I might trace in *Shakespeare* several Parodies upon them;

And if we consider the Difficulty of introducing so nice a Poem as Satire into a Nation, we must allow it required the Assistance of no common and ordinary Genius. The *Italians* had their *Ariosto*, and the *French* their *Regnier*, who might have served him as Models for Imitation; but he copies after the Antients, and chiefly *Juvenal* and *Perseus*; tho' he wants not many Strokes of Elegance and Delicacy, which shew him perfectly acquainted with the manner of *Horace*. Among the several Discouragements which attended his Attempt in that kind, he mentions one peculiar to the Language and Nature of the *English* Versification, which would appear in the Translation of one of *Perseus's* Satires: "The Difficulty and Dissonance whereof," says he, shall make good my Assertion; besides the plain Experience thereof in the Satires of *Ariosto*; save which, "and one base *French* Satire, I could never attain the View of any for my Direction." Yet we may pay him almost the same Compliment which was given of old to *Homer* and *Archilochus*: For the Improvements which have been made by succeeding Poets, bear no manner of Proportion to the Distance of Time between him and them. The Verses of Bishop *Hall* are in general extremely musical and flowing, and are greatly preferable to Dr. *Donne's*, as being of a much smoother Cadence; neither shall we find him deficient, if compared with his Successor, in Point of Thought and Wit; and to exceed him with respect to his Characters, which are more numerous, and wrought up with greater Art and Strength of Colouring. Many of his Lines would do Honour to the most ingenious of our modern Poets; and some of them have thought it worth their Labour to imitate him, especially Mr. *Oldham*. Bishop *Hall* was not only our first Satirist, but was the first who brought epistolary Writing to the View of the Public; which was common in that Age to other Parts of *Europe*, but not practised in *England*, till he published his own Epistles. It may be proper to take Notice, that the *Virgideiæ* are not printed with his other Writings; and that all Account of them is omitted by him, thro' his extreme Modesty, in the Specialties of his Life, prefixed to the 3d Vol. of his Works in Folio. I cannot forbear mentioning

a *Latia*

them ; since the Beauty of some whole Characters is chiefly owing to that Design. What
can

a *Latin* Book of his, equally valuable and forgotten, called *Mundus alter & idem* ; where under a pretended Description of the *Terra Australis*, he gives us a very ingenious Satire on the Vices and Follies of Mankind. To satisfy the Curiosity of the Reader, I have transcribed a Character from the *Virgidemiarum*, which will give him a better Idea of the Whole, than any thing I can say in its Commendation.

But who hath seen the Lambs of *Tarentine*,
May guess what *Gallio* his Manners been :
All soft as is the falling Thistle-downe,
Soft as the fummy Ball, or *Morrian's* Crowne.
Now *Gallio*, 'gins thy youthly Heate to reigne
In every vigorous Limme, and swelling Veine ;
Time bids thee raise thine hedstrong Thoughts on high
To Valour, and adventrous Chivalrie ;
Paune thou no Glove for Challenge of the Deed,
Nor make thy *Quintaine* other's armed Head ;
T' enrich the waiting Herald with thy Shame,
And make thy Losse the scornful Scaffold's Game.
Wars ! God forefend : Nay, God defend from War,
Soon are Sons spent, that not soon reared are :
Gallio may pull me Roses 'ere they fall,
Or in his Net entrap the Tennis-ball :
Or tend his Spar-hawk mantling in her Mew,
Or yelping Beagles busy Heeles persue ;
Or watch a sinking Cork upon the Shore,
Or halter Finches thro' a privy Door :
Or list he spend the Time in sportful Game,
In daily courting of his lovely Dame :
Hang on her Lips, melt in her wanton Eye,
Dance in her Hand, joy in her Jollity :
Here's little Peril, and much lesser Paine,
So timely Hymen doe the rest restraine ;
Hy wanton *Gallio*, and wed betime,
Why should'st thou loose the Pleasures of thy Prime ?

can be more satirically contrived, if we consider it in this View, than the Character of *Pistol*; in whom the Rants and Bombast, either taken or imitated from other Plays, are extremely natural and proper? And *Ben Johnson* introduces in his *Poetaster* some Speeches exactly of the same Stamp with many of *Pistol's* Exclamations:

*Why then lament therefore: Damned be thy Guts
Unto King Pluto's Hell, and princely Erebus.*

Act III. Sc. 4.

There is likewise another Wight of *Falstaff's* cashiered Retinue, the facetious Corporal *Nym*; who recommends himself to our Notice by his Familiarity with a single Word; this he brings into play upon every Turn. *For that's the Humour of it.* The whole Part, I think, seems to be formed with an Intention to expose the Abuse of the Word *Humour*; and as *Johnson* says,

——— *Could not but arrive most acceptable
Chiefly to such, as had the Happiness
Daily to see how the poor innocent Word
Was rack'd and tortur'd.*

Every Man out of his Humour.

See'st thou the Rose-leaves fall ungathered?
Then hy thee, wanton *Gallio*, to wed.

Virg. L. IV. Sat. 4.

I should apologize for the Length of this Note, if I did not think the Subject a sufficient Recompence for the Trouble of reading it.

for

for he has himself remarked upon this un-
meaning Disposition,

————— *When if an Idiot*
Had but an apish or fantastic Strain
It was his Humour. ibid.

and he has a critical Account both of its pri-
mary and metaphorical Acceptation,

To give those ignorant well spoken Days,
Some Taste of their Abuse of this Word Humour.

For even honest *Cob*, the Water-bearer, was
well versed in the Gallantry of the Times, as
he gives us to understand in the following
Speech.

“ *Cob.* Nay, I have my Rheum, and I
“ can be angry as well as another, Sir.

“ *Cash.* Thy Rheum *Cob*? thy Humour,
“ thy Humour, thou mistak’st.

“ *Cob.* Humour? Mack, I think it be so
“ indeed, what is that Humour? Some rare
“ thing I warrant.

“ *Cash.* Marry, I’ll tell thee, *Cob*, It is a
“ Gentleman-like Monster, bred in the special
“ Gallantry of our time by Affectation, and
“ fed by Folly.

“ *Cob.* How, must it be fed?

“ *Cash.* Oh, ay; Humour is nothing if it
“ be not fed. Did’st thou never hear that?

“ It’s a common Phrase, feed my Humour.

Every Man in his Humour. Act III. Sc. 4.

As

As we are upon this Head, I must take Notice of a Play, mentioned by both Authors, which wanted not its Favourers among the Admirers of Jingle and Conceit; and was the common Butt of the more judicious Writers. The Piece I mean is the *Spanish Tragedy*, or *Hieronymo is mad again*. In *Ben Johnson's Every Man in his Humour*, (Act I. Sc. 5.) we have it sneered by a Quotation of some Lines from it.

“ What new Book have you there? says *Boba-*
 “ *dill to Matthew*: What! Go by, *Hieronymo*!
 “ *Matt.* Ay, did you ever see it acted? Is it
 “ not well penn'd? *Bob.* Well penn'd? I
 “ would fain see all the Poets of these Times
 “ pen such another Play as that was. They'll
 “ prate and swagger, and keep a Stir of Art
 “ and Devices, when, as I am a Gentleman,
 “ read 'em, they are the most shallow, pitiful,
 “ barren Fellows that live upon the Face of
 “ the Earth.” After this, *Matthew* begins to repeat a Speech of *Hieronymo's* from the Third Act, abounding with the most jejune and unnatural Turns upon the Word; and concludes it at last, to be excellent, and simply the best that ever was heard.* Again, in the Induction to *Cynthia's Revels*, this Account is given of it.

“ Another, whom it hath pleased Nature to
 “ furnish

* The same Passage which *Johnson* ridicules, is parodied in the Comedy of *Albumazar*, by this Speech of *Trinculo's*.

O Lips, no Lips, but Leaves besmear'd with Mel-dew!
 O Dew, no Dew, but Drops of Honey-Combs!
 O Combs, no Combs, but Fountains full of Tears!
 O Tears, no Tears, but —————

Act II. Sc. 1.

And

“ furnish with more Beard than Brain,
 “ prunes his Mustaccio, lips, and with some
 “ Score of affected Oaths, swears down all
 “ that sits about him, that the old *Hieronymo*
 “ as it was first acted, was the only best and ju-
 “ diciously penn’d Play in *Europe*.” *Shake-*
peare in his Induction to the *Taming of the*
Shrew, puts a Gird at it in the Mouth of the
 drunken Tinker, who is squabbling with his
 Hostess; *Go by, Hieronymo; go to thy cold Bed,*
and warm thee. To understand this the better,
 you should be informed that it alludes to two
 particular Passages in the Play: The first is,
 where *Hieronymo* alarmed with the Murder of
 his Son at Night, which proves at last the Cause
 of his Madness, comes upon the Stage in his
 Shirt, and begins thus:

*What Out-cry calls me from my naked Bed,
 And chills my throbbing Heart with trembling
 Fear,
 Which never Danger yet could daunt before?*

Act II.

The

And the Satire upon Duelling is preserved in the same
 Play with great Humour.

Trinc. *Say, understand'st thou well nice Points of Duel?
 Art born of gentle Blood, and pure Descent? &c.*

Act IV. Sc. 7.

From all this we may collect that the *English* Drama,
 at that Time, was a kind of Medium between the antient
 and middle Comedy of the *Greeks*; and participated in
 some measure of both. And we may observe the Stage
 acted to its proper End, in exposing Folly of all Kinds,
 and in the Support of Wit and Virtue.

The other is, when *Hieronymo*, going to petition the King for Justice on the Murderers, and he asking, *Who is he that interrupts our Business?* returns this Answer: *Not I; Hieronomo, beware, go by, go by.* It is not easy to determine, how so undeserving a Piece could possibly succeed in the public Favour; but I am sure, that it richly Merits every Lash that is bestowed upon it; for it is little else but a continued String of Quibbles and Conceits, even in the most passionate and affecting Parts. There are indeed about six good Lines, describing the time of an Affignation appointed by two Lovers, which are tender and natural enough:

*Our Hour shall be when Vesper 'gins to rise,
That summons home distressed Travellers:
There none shall bear us, but the harmless Birds;
Haply the gentle Nightingale
Shall carrol us asleep e'er we beware,
And singing with the Prickle at her Breast,
Tell our Delight, and sportful Dalliance.*

Act II.

The Author has had the Happiness to be at this Time unknown, the Remembrance of him having perished with himself; yet though his Name is saved, his Work will continue to suffer Life with perpetual Infamy.

This Practice, interposed *Neander*, of censuring the Compositions of each other upon the Stage, seems to have been not infrequent among the Poets of those Days. They are directly

rectly censured by a sound and severe Judgment, or condemned ironically by the Admiration of Clowns and Fools, or the Commendation of such, whose Praise is only Scandal in disguise ; and, if I mistake not, *Eugenius*, *Shakespeare* himself did not escape untouched, but was attacked with the same Weapons he had successfully made use of against others. Your Observation, returned *Eugenius*, is not to be denied ; nor will I conceal from you two Instances out of *Beaumont* and *Fletcher*. In the *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, the *Rehearsal* of that Age, the Citizen's Wife bids her Prentice *Ralph* speak a huffing Part, who immediately throws out,

*By Heav'n methinks it were an easy Leap
To pluck bright Honour from the pale-fac'd
Moon, &c.*

which is a Speech of *Hotspur's* in the First Part of *Henry the Fourth* ; and so likewise in the *Scornful Lady*, *Welford* asks Sir *Roger* the Curate, “ But shall we see these Gentlemomen
“ To-night? *Rog.* Have Patience, Sir, until our
“ Fellow *Nicholas* be deceased, that is asleep.
“ For so the Word is taken ; to sleep, to die ;
“ to die, to sleep ; a very Figure, Sir.” And afterwards : “ Not till the Man be in his Bed,
“ his Grave ; his Grave, his Bed : The very
“ same again, Sir.” This, I perceive, replied *Neander*, is levelled at the Soliloquy of *Hamlet* ; but in order to make the Ridicule more striking, he has given the Words a wrong Turn. However, that ringing such Changes upon

Words was not then uncommon, we may gather from a Part of that very Play, where *Polonius* is made to express himself in the same Trope.

Polon. *Madam, I swear I use no Art at all.
That he is mad, 'tis true; 'tis true 'tis pity,
And pity 'tis, 'tis true: A foolish Figure,
But farewell it.*

Shakespeare, we see then, was fully sensible, how insipid and foolish such Affectation was; and it is not very likely that after he had deservedly laughed at it, he would immediately guilty of it himself.

I agree with you, pursued *Eugenius*, that *Fletcher* hath misrepresented the Sentiment of *Shakespeare*; neither is it very probable that the Poet, who appears from other Passages to be an admirable Critic both of Propriety of Thought and Style, would commit a Fault in the same Breath almost in which he had condemned it. But these Particulars which we have been now inquiring into, *Neander*, will hardly be allowed, I fear, as competent Evidences for the Learning of *Shakespeare*, especially in the Sense that Word is commonly understood. They may be considered, I believe, however, as Instances of his *Domestic* Knowledge, which prove him to have a complete Intelligence of all home Affairs. How extensive his *Foreign* Correspondence was, we shall proceed to inquire in the next Place; and very possibly in the Course of our Remarks, we may
be

be able to produce some Passages that have a manifest Conformity to others in the ancient Classics.

I own indeed that two Writers of Genius and Judgment, may easily fall into a Sameness of thinking upon similar Subjects; and a certain Antient, who is called *Aretades*, composed a Treatise, which is now lost, intitled, *Περὶ συνεισωνίας*, or on the Coincidence of Sentiment in different Authors. Mr. *Menage* likewise in his Remarks on *Malherbe's* Paraphrase of the 145th Psalm, hath put together several Passages from various Writers, in which the same Thought is observed to occur, delivered in very near the same Words: And he adds withal, how little Suspicion there was of their copying from one another. But *Menage* wrote that Note, I fancy, chiefly with an Eye to his own Reputation, since Instances of that nature may serve in some Measure to weaken, if they do not intirely destroy the Reproach of Plagiarism; of which Mr. *Menage* was frequently accused, and perhaps not very unjustly, by several of his Countrymen *. So that after all, when the Likeness is very striking, an impartial Judge may reasonable suspect, that they cannot be both Originals.

Before you enter, interposed *Neander*, upon this Part of your Inquiry, give me leave to propose to you the Correction of an Error, which hath continued unmolested in all the Editions I have yet seen. It is one of the

* See *Ouvrages mêlées de M. Chevreau*, p. 104, & seq.

Verfes of the *Cuckow-Song*, which gave fo much Pleasure to the Town, and was in every Body's Mouth about feven Years ago. The whole of it runs thus,

*When Daifies pied, and Violets blue,
And Lady-smocks all Silver white,
And Cuckow-buds of yellow hue,
Do paint the Meadows with Delight;
The Cuckow then on every Tree, &c.*

Shakespeare, we may perceive, intended to diftinguifh each Flower by an Epithet expreffive of its particular Colour; but in the prefent reading of the third Line, there is a plain Miftake; for the *Cuckow-Flower* is fo far from being yellow, that it has not the leaft Tincture or Shade inclining to that Hue. If you confult any of our Herbalifts, they will give you undeniable Conviction: For one of them informs us, that it is whitifh in colour, or a little dafhed over with a Blufh. We are told by another, that in fome Counties the *Cuckow-flowers* are called *Lady-smocks*. And from hence it fhould feem, that thefe two Terms are but different Names for one and the fame Flower. The Emendation I would fubftitute in its Room, is *Crocus-buds*, a Word exactly agreeable to the Intention of the Poet, and in the ftricteft Senfe literally true. It was very eafy for a carelefs Compofer for the Prefs, efpecially if the Traces of the Letters were not plain, to miftake one for the other; or his Eye through hafte, might cafually drop upon the next Line but one, when it readily coming to
his

his Mind, that there was such a Flower, he clapped it down, without considering whether it was consistent with the Epithet or not. One of these Causes, I imagine, gave rise to the present reading, and brought this Confusion into the Song; which the abovementioned easy Alteration restores to an uniform Simplicity. Your Correction, returned *Eugenius*, may, I think, be very naturally admitted; for however we may dispute the Knowledge of the Poet in Matters of *ancient* Learning, it would be ridiculous to deny him his Share, in a Case where almost every Peasant is a proper Judge, and every Meadow affords numberless Confutations of his Error *. *Shakespeare* wrote with greater Exactness than the Generality of his Readers may imagine; who seldom consider how nice and accurate a Painter he was, as well as the universal Master of Nature; and that he did not render great Subjects more elevated and surprizing by the Magnificence and Sublimity of his Descriptions, than he made common and little ones agreeable by his Likeness and Propriety.

If all the Instances, continued *Eugenius*, which I shall hereafter mention, do not come

* The Authority of *Cowley* may perhaps have some Weight in this Case; the Epithet he gives the Cuckow-flower, is white,

Albaque Cardamine, &c.

Cardamine flore pleno, & cardamine trifolia recipiuntur etiam in hortos: Ang. *Cuckow-flowers* (flos cuculi) *Ladies Smocks*.

Conl. Poem. Lat. p. 161. Edit. 1678.

fully

fully up to the Point which we propose to settle, yet they will convince us at least that *Shakespeare* could not think like the Ancients, and express himself with an equal Simplicity: For I do not pretend to determine, that he had his Eye in every Particular upon some ancient Author. I have placed here the Volumes all before me, with some Strictures which I have made from Antiquity, and shall begin with pointing out a Passage in the *Tempest*, where the Sentiment is full in the Spirit of *Homer*. It is *Prospero's* Answer to his Daughter.

Be collected:

*No more Amazement ; tell your piteous Heart,
There's no Harm done.* Act I. Sc. 2.

Would not you think that the Poet was imitating those Places in the other, where his Heroes are rousing up their Courage to take Heart of Grace, and begin with a

Τετλαθι δε κραδιη.

We may observe also in the same Play a remarkable Example of his Knowledge in the ancient Poetic Story; when *Ceres* in the Masque speaks thus to *Iris* upon the Approach of *Juno*:

High Queen of State,
Great Juno comes ; I know her by her Gait.

Here methinks now is no small Mark of the Judgment of our Author, in selecting this peculiar

culiar Circumstance for the Discovery of *Juno*. And was *Virgil* himself to have described her Motion, he would have done it in the same manner ; for, probably, the *Divum incedo Regina* of that Author, might furnish *Shakespeare* with the Hint : And his *Decorum* of the Character is perfectly consistent, and her Attendance upon the Wedding intirely agreeable to her Office.

Let us turn now to the next Play, where a Passage stops us at the very Beginning. *Theseus* complains thus of the Tardiness of Time ;

————— *Oh, methinks, how slow*
This old Moon wanes ! she lingers my Desires
Like to a Stepdame, or a Dowager
Long withering out a young Man's Revenue.
Midsummer-Nights Dream, Act I. Sc. 1.

Suppose we were to put this into a *Latin* Dress, could any Words express it more exactly, than these of *Horace*,

————— *Ut piger Annus*
Pupillis, quos dura premit custodia matrum,
Sic mihi tarda fluunt, ingrataque tempora.
L. I. Ep. 1. v. 21, & seq.

Pass we on from these to *Measure for Measure*, where in the second Scene of the third Act, *Clodio* gives us such an Image of the intermediate State after Death, as bears a great Resemblance to the *Platonic* Purgations described by *Virgil*.

Ay,

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where ;

*——the delighted Spirit
To bathe in fiery Floods, or to reside
In thrilling Regions of thick-ribbed Ice,
To be imprison'd in the viewless Winds,
And blown with restless Violence round about
The pendant World, &c.*

*Ergo exercentur pætis, veterumque malorum
Supplicia expendunt. Aliæ panduntur inanes
Suspensæ ad ventos : aliis sub gurgite vasto
Infectum eluitur scelus, aut exuritur igni.*
Æneid, L. IV. 739, & seq.

The next Instance which I have observed to demand our Notice, occurs in *Much ado about Nothing* ; where the Thought is very natural and obvious, founded on a Failing common to Human Nature.

*——What we have we prize not to its worth
Whilst we enjoy it ; but being lack'd and lost,
Why, then we rack the Value ; then we find
The Virtue that Possession would not shew us
Whilst it was ours.* Act IV. Sc. 2.

You may have seen, perhaps, the same Sentiment in many Classic Authors ; but the most analogous, and which would almost tempt one to believe the Poet had it directly before him, is the following from *Plautus* :

Tum

*Tum denique homines nostra intelligimus bona,
Cum quæ in potestate habuimus, ea amisimus.*

Captiv. Act I. Sc. II. v. 29.

Shakespeare's Translation of these Verses, if I may take the Liberty to call it so, tho' something diffused and paraphrastical, exceeds, in my humble Opinion, the Original; for the Proposition being diversified so agreeably, makes a deeper Impression on the Mind and Memory.

If we compare the Description of the wounded Stag, in *As you like it*, with *Virgil's* Relation of the Death of the same Creature, we shall find that *Shakespeare's* is as highly finished and as masterly as the other :

*The wretched Animal heav'd forth such Groans,
That their Discharge did stretch his Leathern
Coat*

*Almost to bursting; and the big round Tears
Cours'd one another down his innocent Cheeks
In piteous Chase.*

Act II. Sc. I.

What an exquisite Image this of dumb Distress, and of a wounded Animal languishing in the Agonies of Pain! I cannot help thinking that the Lines of *Virgil* do not reach it altogether so perfectly.

*Saucius at Quadrupes nota intra tecta refugit,
 Successitque gemens stabulis: Questuque cruentus,
 Atque imploranti similis tectum omne replevit.*

Æneid, L. VII. v. 500 & seq.

I now turn to the Tragedy of *King Lear*, where his passionate Exclamations against his Daughters, appear to have been copied from the *Thyestes* of *Seneca*,

*I will have such Revenges on you both
 That all the World shall—I will do such things;
 What they are yet I know not; but they shall be
 The Terrors of the Earth.* Act II. Sc. 2.

—*Fac quod nulla posteritas probet,
 Sed nulla taceat: aliquod audendum est nefas
 Atrox, cruentum:* Act II. v. 192, & seq.

—————*Haud, quid sit, scio.*
Sed grande quiddam est. Ibid. 270.

And in the fourth Act we meet with a Passage which deserves our Attention upon a double Account. *Gloster* lamenting the Abuses which had been put both on himself and his Son *Edgar*, wishes that he might find him; and expresseth himself thus,

—————*O dear Son, Edgar,
 The Food of thy abused Father's Wrath;
 Might I but live to see thee in my Touch
 I'd say, I had Eyes again.* Act IV. Sc. i.

To say nothing of the *Oculatæ Manus* of the Comic Poet, you may remark in these Lines a Contrariety of Metaphor equally bold and elegant;

gant ; of which you may find many Examples in the ancient Tragedians, and particularly in *Æschylus*, the *Athenian Shakespeare*. The whole of it has a remarkable Affinity to the Lamentation of *Œdipus* in his Blindness, desiring that his Daughters might be brought him :

————— μαλιστα μὲν χεῖρας
Ψαύσαι μ' εἶπον, καὶ πικρὰ κλαύσασθαι κακά.
————— χεῖρας δ' αὖθιγ' ἴδω
Δόκοι μ' εἶναι σφας, ὥσπερ ἦν κ' ἐβλεπόν.

*Oh, might I once but have them in my Touch,
Weep o'er their Sorrows, and lament our Fate.
With either Hand to touch their tender Forms,
Would make me think that I had Eyes again.*

There is another Passage in *King Lear*, which though not taken expressly from any particular Author, is directly the Language of the Ancients upon such Occasions. They were frequently induced by Misfortunes to deny the Justice and Equity of Heaven ; and when they poured forth their Complaints, we heard of nothing but *Superûm Crimina*, & *Deorum Iniquitas*. *Claudian*, who was sceptically inclined, and questioned the Knowledge and Wisdom of Providence, at length acquitted the Gods, and was convinced by the Punishment of *Rufinus* :

*Abstulit hunc tandem Rufini pœna tumultum,
Absolvitque Deos.*

Claudian in *Rufin*. L. I. sub init.

The Close of the Period in *Shakespeare* is exactly of the same kind :

————— Take Physic, Pomp,
Expose thy self to feel what Wretches feel,
That thou mayest shake the Superflux to them,
And shew the Heavens more just.

Act III. Sc. 5.

The Thought in both Poets is evidently false, not being founded upon Truth and Reason, and is parallel to many of the stoical Extravagancies of *Lucan*.

By continuing our Progress, we come to the first Part of *Henry* the IVth, where we have an humorous Application of a *Greek* Proverb :
“ How long is’t ago, *Jack*, says *Hal* to *Fal-staff*, since thou saw’st thy own Knee ?
“ *Fal*. My own Knee ? When I was about
“ thy Years, *Hal*, I could have crept into any
“ *Alderman’s Thumb Ring*.” Creeping through a Ring was a Phrase usually applied to such as were extremely thin ; for this Reason the old Woman in *Aristophanes* makes use of it in that Sense :

Γρ. δια δακτυλίου μιν εν εμε γ’ αν διελκυσαις.

Χρ. ει τυγχανει ο δακτυλιος ων τηλια.

Plut v. 1067, & seq.

“ You may draw me, says she, very easily
“ through a Ring. Ay, replies *Cbremylus*, if
“ that Ring was about the Size of a Hoop.”

From

From this we may proceed to the second Part of *Henry* the IVth, where we meet with a political Observation of *Warwick's*, who accounts for the Disloyalty of *Northumberland*, by observing that he had proved faithless to King *Richard* :

*There is a History in all Men's Lives,
Figuring the Nature of the Times deceased :
The which observ'd, a Man may prophesy
With a near Aim of the Main Chance of things
As yet not come to Life ; which in their Seeds,
And weak Beginnings lie intreasured,*

Act III. Sc. 2.

A Section of *Antoninus* will confirm and illustrate the Remark of *Shakespeare* : I will read it to you, as I find it translated by Mr. *Collier*.
“ By looking back into History, and considering the Fate and Revolutions of Government, you will be able to form a Guess, and almost prophesy upon the future ; for things past, present, and to come are strangely uniform and of a Colour, and are commonly cast in the same Mould. So that upon the Matter, forty Years of Human Life may serve for a Sample of ten thousand.” *Lib. VII. Sect 49.* And such is the Character which *Pliny* gives of *Mauricus* :
“ Vir erat gravis, prudens, multis experimentis eruditus, & qui futura possit ex præteritis prævidere. *L. I. Epist. 5.*

The next Place remarkable which offers itself, is the Parting between *Suffolk* and Queen *Mary*,

Mary, in the 2d Part of *Henry VI.* Act III.
Sc. 8.

*A Wildernefs is populous enough,
So Suffolk had thy heavenly Company;
For where thou art, there is the World itfelf,
With every feveral Pleasure in the World;
And where thou art not, Defolation.*

This is the antient Language of Love and
Friendship, and employed by *Tibullus* to his
own Miftrefs.

*Sic Ego secretis possum bene vivere Silvis,
Qua nulla humano fit via trita pede:
Tu mihi curaram requies, tu nocte vel atrâ
Lumen, & in folis tu mihi turba locis.*

L. IV. El. 12.

In the third Part of *Henry VI.* *Edward*, Son
to the Duke of *York*, replies to his Father,
who had urged to him the Oath which he had
taken to the King,

*But for a Kingdom an Oath may be broken,
I'd break a thousand Oaths to reign one Year.*

Act I. Sc. 4.

How exactly *Cæsar* and the young Nobleman
could think upon the same Occasion, will ap-
pear from a Speech which the first of them
used frequently to repeat from the *Phenissæ* of
Euripides;

Nam

*Nam si violandum est Jus, regnandi Gratiâ
Violandum est; aliis rebus pietatem colas.*

Tull. Off. L. III. C. 21.

The Character which *Gloucester* in *Richard* III. gives of *Hastings*, has a visible Similitude to some Lines in *Horace*; only in this latter the Thought is inverted.

*I made him my Book, wherein my Soul recorded
The History of all her secret Thoughts.*

Act III. Sc. 6.

*Ille velut fidis arcana Sodalibus, olim
Credebat Libris.*

L. II. Sat. 1. v. 30.

When I read, interrupted *Neander*, in *Henry* VIII. Act III. Sc. 1. this Speech of the Queen's to the two Cardinals;

*Would I had never trod this English Earth,
Or felt the Flatteries that grow upon it :
Ye've ANGEL'S Faces, but Heaven knows your
Hearts.*

I have always imagined that he alluded to the well known Pun of *Gregory* the Great, upon remarking the Beauty of some *English* Youths, who were exposed to Sale at *Rome* before their Conversion to Christianity. It is the same which was afterwards made use of by the Marquis of *Villa* in his Epigram on *Milton*.

As

As often as I repeat this Apostrophe of
Antony in *Julius Cæsar*, returned *Eugenius*,

*That I did love thee, Cæsar, oh 'tis true :
If then thy Spirit look upon us now,
Shall it not grieve thee dearer than thy Death,
To see thy Antony making his Peace, &c.*

Act III. Sc. 3.

it always brings to my Memory the following
Passage in *Homer* :

Μη, μοι Πατροκλε, σκυδμανεμεν, αιχε πυθσαι
Εις αιδος περ ιων οτι Εκτορα διον ελυσα
Πατρι Φιλω' επει θ μοι αιχια δωκεν αποινα. H. 24. 590.

*If in that Gloom which never Light must know,
The Deeds of Mortals touch the Ghosts below ;
O Friend ! forgive me that I thus fulfill,
(Restoring Hector) Heav'n's unquestion'd Will.
The Gifts the Father gave, be ever thine,
To grace thy Manes, and adorn thy Shrine.*

POPE.

I cannot pass over what I have observed in
Titus Andronicus, tho' there is a Probability it
might not come from *Shakespeare*. *Tamora*
thus intercedes for the Life of her Son :

*Wilt thou draw near the Nature of the Gods ?
Draw near them then by being merciful. Act I.*

Which is directly the Sense and Words of a
Passage in one of *Cicero's* finest Orations: *Ho-*
mines

mines AD DEOS NULLA RE PROPIUS ACCEDUNT, quam Salutem hominibus dando. Orat. pro Ligar. sub fin. And *Portia* describing the Amiability of Mercy in the *Merchant of Venice*, reasons much to the same Purpose.

*It is an Attribute to God himself ;
And earthly Power doth then shew likest God's
When Mercy seasons Justice.* Act IV.

We have another Passage in the same Play, which seems to allude to an Opinion of Antiquity. It is when the *Moor* receives his Son which the Nurse brought him from the Empress, and he thus exults upon the Occasion.

*Look how the black Slave smiles upon his Father,
As who should say, old Lad, I am thine own.*
Act IV. Sc. 3.

To explain this more fully, we may remember that Opinion of the Antients, which interpreted the Smiles of an Infant upon his Parent, either as the Presage of his future good Fortune, or as the Mark whereby he owned and discovered them. Alluding to this Notion, *Virgil* addresses himself to the Son of *Pollio* in the same manner.

Incipe, parve puer, risu cognoscere Matrem.
Eclog. IV. 60.

I might have observed too, as an Instance of the Poet's reading, that *Antony's* Description of the *Nilometer* in *Egypt*, and the Manner of their Sowing upon the Decrease of the *Nile*, is
I perfectly

perfectly agreeable to those Accounts which are given both by antient and modern Travellers. *Anton. and Cleopatra.* Act II. Sc. 7.

Hector in the ninth Scene of the fourth Act of *Troilus and Cressida* describes *Neoptolemus* in this manner ;

On whose bright Crest Fame with her loud'st
O yes,
Cries, this is He.

which may be considered as an Improvement of

At Pulchrum est digito monstrari, & dicier,
hic est,

which we meet with in *Perfius*. And when *Thersites* in the last Act, Sc. 13. tells a Bastard Son of *Priam*, *one Bear will not bite another, and wherefore should one Bastard?* He makes an humorous Allusion to *Sævis inter se convenit Urfis*, an Observation of the other Satirist.

I must not pass by *Cymbeline*, without pointing out one Scene in which *Posthumus*, convinced as he thought of the Dishonesty of his Wife, is most satirically severe on the whole Sex. *Euripides*, who from his numerous Invectives of the same kind, is branded with the Name of Woman-hater, hath nothing more keen and poignant. In one Sentiment they agree entirely; for thus *Posthumus* begins his Soliloquy ;

Is

*Is there no Way for Men to be, but Women
Must be half Workers? &c.* Act II. Sc. 7.

And the Greek Tragedian affirms the same.

Χρην μὲν αλλοθεν ποθεν βροτῶς
Παιδας τεκνεσθαι, θηλυ δ' ἔκ τινος γενεῶν.
Οὐλοῦ δ' ἂν ἔκ τινος ἔδεν ἀνθρώποις κακόν.

Medea. v. 573. & seq.

Milton, who knew how upon Occasion to rail
against the Ladies, has enlarged on these Verses
of *Euripides* in this manner.

————— O! why did God,
Creator wise! that peopled bighest Heaven
With Spirits masculine, create at last
This Novelty on Earth, this fair Defect
Of Nature? And not fill the World at once
With Men, as Angels, without feminine?
Or find some other Way to generate
Mankind? This Mischief had not then befall'n
And more that shall befall.

Parad. Lost. L. 10. v. 888. & seq.

I carry you from hence to review some Passages in *Hamlet*; in which the Elogy he gives
of his deceased Father, seems to comprehend a
finished Character.

*He was a Man, take him for all and all,
I shall not look upon his like again.* Act I. Sc. 4.

This will be thought, perhaps, too much the
I 2 Suggestion

Suggestion of Nature, and of the human Heart, to be taken from a Place of *Sophocles*, to which it has a great Affinity.

Παύων αρίστον ἀνδρα τῶν ἐπὶ χθονὶ
κτείνας, ὅποιον ἄλλον οὐ οὔτι ποτε.

Trachin. v. 821. & seq.

*In him you kill'd the best of Men below,
And ne'er will look upon his like again.*

We come next to that celebrated Soliloquy in the third Act, Sc. 2. which seems so peculiarly the Production of *Shakespeare*, that you would hardly imagine it can be paralleled in all Antiquity. Yet I will produce some Examples of the same kind; one of which at least will shew how nearly two great Tragedians could think upon the same Subject. A learned Gentleman has taken Notice of the Conformity which there is between a Passage in *Plato's* Apology for *Socrates*, and the following Lines in this Speech*. The Sentiment of *Plato* is to this Purpose; *If, says he, there be no Sensation after Death, but as when one sleeps, and sees no Dream, Death were then an inestimable Gain.* And the Verses of the Poet, are these which follow.

————— *To die! to sleep!*
No more—— and by a Sleep to say we end
The Heart-ack, &c.———

* Translation of *Tryphiodorus*, p. 76.

————— *To die! to sleep!*
To sleep! perchance to dream! Ay, there's the
Rub, &c.

And the whole has a remarkable Similitude
 with these Verses in the *Hippolytus* of *Euripides*.

Πας δ' οδυνηρος βίος ἀνθρώπων
 Κ' ἔκ ἐστὶ πόνων ἀναπαυσίς·
 Ἀλλ' ο, τί τε ζῆν φιλεῖον ἄλλο
 Σκόλοσ' ἀμπισχόν κρυπτεῖ νεφέλαις·
 Δυσερῶτες δὲ φαίνομεθ' ὄντες
 Τεθ', οἳ σιλβῇ τὸτο κάλα γῆν,
 Δι' ἀπειροσυναν ἄλλῃ εἶσθε,
 Κ' ἔκ ἀποδείξιν τῶν ὑπο γαίας.

V. 190. & seq.

How full of Sorrow are the Days of Man,
Of endless Labour and unceasing Woe!
And what succeeds, our Hopes but ill presage,
For Clouds conceal, and Darkness rests upon it.
Yet still we suffer Light, averse to Life:
Still bend reluctant to those Ills we have,
Thro' Dread of others which we know not of,
And fearful of that undiscovered Shore.

And in particular,

That undiscover'd Country from whose Bourn
No Traveller returns,

may be very well translated by this of the
Latin Poet.

Nunc it per Iter tenebricosum,
Illuc, unde negant redire quenquam.

Catull. III. v. 11.

I appre-

I apprehend it was from the Frequency of these moral Reflections; interposed *Neander*, many of which were probably put into his Mouth by *Socrates*, that *Euripides* had the Appellation given him of the Dramatic Philosopher. The same Title may be attributed to *Shakespeare*, if we are determined by the Suffrage of a noble Author; whose Opinion will not be hastily disputed if we think with his Admirers, that he has reduced Morality to a less ungainly Form, than what she usually had. His Judgment on this Tragedy would confirm us, which he properly considers, as a continued Moral; a Series of deep Reflections proceeding from the Mouth of one Person, on the most important Subject*. Every Person, returned *Eugenius*, has those particular Sentiments which constitute the Character: for even *Polonius* appears furnished with such Observations, which long Experience naturally produces. What he observes of the Partiality of Mothers to their Children in the Commission of any Crime, is agreeable to a Remark of *Terence*.

*'Tis meet that some more Audience than a Mother
(Since Nature makes them partial) shou'd o'er-hear
The Speech, of Vantage.* Act III. Sc. 8.

The Comic Poet gives it us in this manner.

————— *Matres omnes filiis
In Peccato adjutrices, Auxilio in Paterna injuria
Solent esse.* Heauton. Act V. Sc. 2. v. 38.

* *Characteristics*, 1st Vol. p. 275. & seq.

We are at length, *Neander*, drawing near to the Conclusion of our Enquiry, for I shall end with an Instance from *Othello*, which is visibly parallel to a Thought of the like Nature in *Terence*.

————— *If I were now to die
'Twere now to be most happy: For I fear
My Soul bath her Content so absolute,
That not another Comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown Fate.* A& II. Sc. 6.

And thus *Chærea*, in an Extasy of Joy, breaks out in a like Exclamation.

————— *Proh Jupiter!
Nunc Tempus profecto est, cum perpeti me possum
interfici:
Ne Vita aliquâ hoc Gaudium contamineat ægritudine.*

Eunuch. A& III. Sc. 5.

There is a Passage, *Neander*, in this Play, not currently approved of, and expunged, I find, in several late Editions. It is part of the *Moor's* Relation to the Senate, of the Stories which he told *Desdemona* in his Courtship.

*And of the Cannibals that each other eat,
The Anthropophagi: and Men whose Heads
Do grow beneath their Shoulders.*

As repugnant as this seems to common Sense, if I might venture to play the Critic, I should
probably

probably insert it in its Place again. Tho' my Reasons may not be so convincing to you as they are to me, you will think them, perhaps, not altogether void of Foundation. The Stream of romancing ran high in the Time of *Shakespeare*, occasioned by the imperfect Discoveries which had been lately made in the new World. The Reports of Travellers were seldom attended to, if they contained only such Accidents as might happen to any one without stirring from his Chimney Corner. On this Account a Portion of the Marvellous was thrown in, to excite Attention; and to make themselves appear as fortunate in seeing strange Sights, as others who went in quest of foreign Adventures. Accordingly *Othello* is made to use the Style so much in Vogue; and it is equally Defensible, whether we consider it as proper to gain Audience with a Female Ear, or as a Censure upon these Heroes of their own Imagination. What would further induce me to continue these Verses in the Text, is the following Satire from the *Virgidemiarum*; where mention is made, among many others, of the same Curiosities which our Poet talks of. You will remark the great Conformity betwixt them both; and of Consequence, how naturally these exceptionable Lines of *Shakespeare*, are connected with those immediately preceding them.

*The Brain-sick Youth that feeds his tickled Eare
With sweet-sauc'd Lies of some false Traveller;
Which bath the Spanish Decades red a-while,
Or Whet-stone Leafings of old Maundevile:*

Now

*Now with Discourses breaks his Midnight Sleep
 Of his Adventures thro' the Indian Deepe ;
 Of all their massy Heapes of golden Mines,
 Or of the antique Tombs of Palestine ;
 Or of Damascus magike Wall of Glasse,
 Of Solomon his sweating Piles of Brasse :
 Of the Bird Ruc that bears an Elephant,
 Of Mermaids that the Southerne Seas do haunt :
 Of Headless Men, of Savage Cannibals
 The Fashions of their Lives and Governalls, &c.
 Virgidem. L. IV. Sat. 6.*

The Description of *Shakespeare* will receive, I hope, no Injury by the Comparison.

*Wherein of Antres vast, and Desarts idle
 Rough Quarries, Rocks, and Hills whose Heads
 touch Heaven,
 It was my Hint to speak, such was the Proceſs ;
 And of the Cannibals that each other eat,
 The Anthropophagi, and Men whose Heads
 Do grow beneath their Shoulders, &c.
 Othello. Act I.*

I have not chose to insist upon *Shakespeare's* particular Acceptation of some Words, in a Sense

* The Origin of all these Fables is to be found in Sir *John Mandeville*, whose Travels have proved a very fruitful Source of Wonders to succeeding Writers. The excessive Superstition of our Phyſician, led him to believe all the Wonders which were imposed upon him : And gave room at the same time for those additional Stories, which were probably forced into his Voyage by other Hands, who were desirous to display their Knowledge in *Pliny*, from whom they took their Lies.—“ Aftreward

K

“ Men

Sense in which they are taken by the *Classics*, and not in the common Use of that Age in which he lived ; which amounts to a Proof, that he was a perfect Master of the Language, from which he borrowed them. And I might have added some particular expressive Metaphors, which may be paralleled by others in the Antients ; as when the Rabble in *Coriolanus* are

“ Men gon be many Yles be See, unto a Yle that Men
 “ clepen *Milke* : and there is a fulle cursed Peple : for thei
 “ delyten in ne thing more, than for to figheten and to
 “ sle Men. And thei drynken gladlyest Mannes Blood,
 “ the whiche thei clepen Dieu.” P. 235. “ And in ano-
 “ ther Yle, toward the Southie duellen Folk of foule Sta-
 “ ture and of cursed kynd, than han no Hedes ; and
 “ here Eyen ben in here Scholdres.” P. 243. Edit. 1725.

Our Countryman delivered nothing in these surprizing Relations, but what the rest of *Europe* was accustomed to believe and hear. The *Spanish* Voyager, *Mendez Pinto*, had an equal Fertility of Genius, or which amounts to the same, as large a Measure of Credulity. The Character which is given Sir *John Mandeville*, in the Epitaph on his Tomb at *Liege*, represents him as a devout and pious Christian.

Est in hac quoque regione Guilielmitarum Cænobium, in quo Epitaphium hoc Johannis à Mandeville excepimus :

HIC IACET VIR NOBILIS DNS. IOES DE MAN-
 DEVILLE AL' DCVS AD BARBAM MILES DNS
 DE CAMPDI NATVS DE ANGLIA MEDICINE PRO-
 FESSOR DEVOTISSIMVS ORATOR ET BONO-
 RVM LARGISSIMVS PAVPERIBUS EROGATOR
 QVI TOTO QVASI ORBE LUSTRATO LEODII
 DIEM VITE SVE CLAUSIT EX TREMV ANO.
 DNI. M^o CCC^o. LXXI^o. MENSIS NOVEBR^s DIE
 XVII.

Hæc in Lapide, in quo cælata viri armata Imago, Leonem calcantis, barba bifurcata, ad caput manus benedicens, & vernacula hæc Verba :

VOS

are called, a *Pile of noisom, musty* CHAFF, Act V. which *Aristophanes* hath employed in a Case not very unlike the former :

Τὴς γὰρ μετοικῆς Ἀχχὺρα τῶν αἰσῶν λέγω.

ACHAR.

But these, with many others, I did not think it material to mention, unwilling to descend to the *Minutiæ* of Criticism, and because you must have remarked the same in your own reading.

Thus, *Neander*, I have sufficiently exercised your Patience by this long Detail of unjointed Citations, which would have created a sufficient Disgust to a more fastidious Critic. Yet as they were taken from *Shakespeare*, and from other Authors of the first Rank, I have the less Occasion to trouble you with an Apology for their Number. I do not desire to prepossess you in our Favour, leaving you at full Liberty to determine, as the Weight of Evidence inclineth you.

The Satisfaction you have given me, replied *Neander*, in thus bringing me acquainted with

VOS KI PASEIS SOR MI POVR LAMOVR DEIX
PROIES POR MI.

Clypeus erat vacuus, in quo olim laminam fuisse dicebant aream, & ejus in ea itidem cælata Insignia, Leonem videlicet argenteum, cui ad Pectus Lunula rubea in Campo cæruleo, quem limbus ambiret denticulatus ex auro. Ejus nobis ostendebant & cultros, Ephippiaque, & calcaria, quibus usum fuisse asserabant in peragrando toto fere terrarum orbe, ut clarius ejus testatur Itinerarium.

Ortelii Itinerat. Gallæ-Brabant, p. 129, & seq.

many things I was before a stranger to in *Shakespeare*, can be only equalled by the Willingness you have shewn, and the obliging manner in which you did it : But I will waste no time, *Eugenius*, in forming Compliments, which would not well agree with that Intimacy which subsists between us. I must own that many of the Places you have quoted, are of the same Cast with others in the ancient Classics. But whether their Similitude is strong enough to prove them Copies from those Originals, I cannot infallibly decide. It is very probable that they are ; though the Marks indeed are not so plain, as in those Passages which *Ben Johnson* hath translated, where almost every Author may swear to his own Property. There is one ancient Book, *Eugenius*, you have omitted, in which he appears to have been much conversant, and which seems in various Instances to have given a very considerable Elevation to his Style. He has misapplied it, I confess, in some few Passages by a little wicked Wit, but what may easily be pardoned upon the whole. The Book which I am speaking of, is the BIBLE ; which he and *Milton* are greatly indebted to both for Sentiment and Diction. The Wits of our Age indeed are commonly as utter Strangers to these Writings, as they pretend to be intimate with the others ; or if a Passage should chance at any time to come athwart their Memory, they testify their good Will to it by a gross and intolerable Perversion.

There is a Pleasure in tracing out Imitations,
or Allusions in one Author to the Works of
another

another ; which those, who are fond of it, may enjoy to a high Degree in the Plays of *Ben Johnson*. You are perpetually making new Discoveries, and enjoy the same Satisfaction in the Pursuit, as a Mathematician would receive in the Investigation of a Theorem. For this Reason, I have thought his Works yield as much entertainment in the Study, as on the Stage ; because, unless the Characters are supported with much Life, the Spirit evaporates and becomes insipid. All Instances of the kind which we have mentioned, with every Stroke of the satirical Humour, is lost in the Representation, especially to a common Audience.

There is a Place in the *Alchymist* evidently of this nature ; and as often as this Comedy is acted, I much question whether the true Humour of it, ever entered completely into the Thoughts of its intelligent Spectators. It is *Mammon's* Account to *Surley* of the Origin and Antiquity of *Alchymy* ; which contains an admirable Satire on one of the most fanciful Authors that ever wrote *.

Mam. *I'll shew you a Book, where Moses and his Sister,*

And Solomon have written of the Art :

Ay, and a Treatise penn'd by Adam.

Sur. *How !*

Mam. *Of the Philosopher's Stone, and in high Dutch.*

* *Universal History* 1st Vol. 8vo. p. 246.

Sur.

Sur. *Did Adam write, Sir, in High Dutch?*
 Mam. *He did.*

Which proves it was the primitive Tongue.

Act II. Sc. I.

Who would have looked in this Scene for so unexpected a Wipe on *Goropius Becannus*; who endeavours, among other Paradoxes, to prove that the *Teutonic* Language was the primitive Tongue; and that it was spoke by *Adam*, and even by the Deity himself in Paradise †.

I believe, continued *Neander*, that not only the Riches of *Shakespeare's* Genius, prevented him from borrowing from the Ancients in many Instances, but that he was prevented as much from doing so by his Judgment likewise. For marking every Character with Sentiments which cannot possibly be applied to any other, he was under the less Necessity of having recourse to any common-place Topics; and especially to that curious Mixture of the fierce and tender; of ranting against the Gods, idolizing a Mistress, or unnaturally braving ones own Misfortunes; than all which nothing can be more dextrous, it being as easy as lying. Nor was he obliged to call out in the Style of Patriotism, on *Liberty* and *Virtue*; Sentiments which have stood many modern Poets in great stead; being suitable to every great Man, and equally proper either in the Mouth of a *Scipio*, or *Hannibal*.

† See his *Origin. Antwerp.*

It will be alledged, perhaps, that *Shakespeare* took his Hints from the Translations, which were made in the Reigns of Queen *Elizabeth* and King *James*. *Ovid* appears to have been a favourite Author with the Poet, whose Cause he pleads in the following Lines :

*Let's be no Stoics, nor no Stocks I pray,
Or so devote to Aristotle's Checks,
As Ovid be an out-cast quite abjured.*

Taming of the Shrew, Act I. Sc. 1.

As his own Translations from this Poet prove him to be a Master of his Works, I think it may be concluded he was a competent Judge of other Authors who wrote in the same Language. These are much superior to a Translation of the *Metamorphoses* by *Arthur Golding*, a Person of some Eminence for Learning in those Days, who translated also *Cæsar's* Commentaries. My Edition is printed in 1603, on a black Letter, and in the same Metre with *Phaer's Virgil*.

That seven-foot Measure, replied *Eugenius*, was the common length in all Versions of the ancient Poets : And the Translation of *Seneca's* Tragedies by several Hands in 1581, is all in that way, except the Chorusses, which are in a different Metre. You will give me leave to read you Part of one Chorus, which exceeds the usual Poetry of that Age, and is equal perhaps to any of the Versions which have been made of it since. It is the Conclusion of the second Act of the *Thyestes*, beginning at

Stet

*Stet quicunque volet potens,
Aulæ culmine lubrico.*

The whole is translated as we find at the Beginning of the Tragedy, by *Jasper Heywood* Fellow of *Alsolne Colledge in Oxenforde*.

*Eche Man himself this Kyngdome geeves at hand.
Let who so lyst with mighty mace to raygne,
In tyckle toppe of Court delight to stand ;
Let me the sweet and quiet rest obtayne.
So set in Place obscure, and lowe Degree,
Of pleasaunt Rest, I shall the Sweetness knoe ;
My Life, unknowne to them that noble bee,
Shall in the Steppe of secret Silence goe.
Thus when my Days at length are over past
And Tyme without all troublous Tumult spent ;
An aged Man I shall depart at last,
In mean Estate, to dye full well content.
But grievous is to him the Death, that when
So farre abroad the Bruite of him is blowne,
That knowne he is too much to other Men,
Departeth yet unto himself unknowne.*

I have one Observation more to detain you with, *Neander*, which relates to *Milton's* Imitation of our Author. He confessed indeed, that *Spenser* was his poetical Father ; but he seems to have improved the Dignity of his Style, by a familiar Conversation with the Writings of *Shakespeare*. And he is no less obliged to him for the softer Beauties of his smaller Compositions. That very picturesque
Image

Image of *Laughter* holding both his Sides, in the *L'Allegro*, seems to have been taken from this Line in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* ;

*And then the whole Quire hold their Hips and
loffe.* Act II Sc. 1.

As the following in *Richard the Second*,

————— *Who are the Violets now,
That strew the green Lap of the new come Spring ?*
Act V. Sc. 4.

may have given him the Hint of these ;

*The flow'ry May who from her green Lap throws,
The yellow Cowslip, and the pale Primrose.*
Song on May Morning.

For *Shakespeare* could be no less the Poet of Nature in drawing rural and descriptive Scenes, than in painting the Passions and Manners.

Your mentioning *Milton*, interposed *Neander*, inclines me to desire your Opinion upon a Point, which is not very foreign to our present Subject. A learned Gentleman hath taken some Pains to prove him a notorious Plagiary ; and that his *Paradise Lost* is little better than a Transcript from certain modern Poets, who have wrote upon the like Argument. He affirms the same too of the *Paradise Regained*, and of his *Sampson Agonistes*. I think, returned *Eugenius*, that the Gentleman would find some Difficulty in making good his Allegations ;

L

and

and that he will never be able to produce 2000 Verses, which are a direct Translation, I do not say from one Author alone, as he seems to assert, but from his whole Body of Poets put together. It surely does not follow, that because his Title is a-kin to those of others, his whole Work must be taken from them: Or that because he has translated three Lines from *Grotius*, and as many, perhaps, from *Ramsay*, or *Masenius*, he must, of Consequence, have adopted the whole Tragedy of another. But allowing the Fact, interposed *Neander*, in what consists the Crime? Hath not *Virgil* done the same from *Homer*? And are not all Authors whatsoever, especially *opere in longo*, indebted to some others for a Sentiment or two? If he would consult a certain *German** I could mention, he would receive full Conviction on that Head. *Sophocles*, and *Seneca*, and *Corneille* have wrote each of them an *Oedipus*; but *Dryden* was never yet accused of stealing his from either. The last great Poet of our Nation made no Scruple to confess, that he served himself all he could by his Reading †, which any one may see, who but dips into a Page of his Works: And he never was charged with Plagiarism, but by such whose Character I am as little inclined to fix on Mr. *L.* as he deserves it. If the Gentleman, replied *Eugenius*, would favour us with an Edition of those Poets who have wrote on sacred Subjects, for which he

* *Thomasius de Plagio Literario*, to which I might add the *Centuria Plagiariorum* of *Fabricius*.

† *Pope's* Preface to his Works.

appears

appears extremely well qualified, he would do a much more acceptable Service to Men of Letters, than by obtruding tortured Translations upon *Milton*, and afterwards reproaching the poor Eyeless Bard with Names of Ignominy and Disgrace.

If this Inquiry into *Shakespeare's* Learning had fallen into such industrious Hands, you had probably seen more and stronger Examples than any which I am able to produce; tho' at the same time, perhaps, he would have met with more ungentle Treatment. I believe I ought to retract that Opinion; for there is no one but must be awed with Admiration in reading the Poet, whose Character is as much beyond Description, as he is above all others who have wrote in the same Art. The Judgment of *Quintilian*, with respect to *Cicero*, with a little Alteration, may faintly shadow out his Excellence; since he seems to have obtained that Honour with Posterity, that *Shakespeare* may be esteemed not so much the Name of a Man, as of Dramatic Poetry itself. And that to have a proper Relish for his Plays, is a Sign of a true and improved Taste*. Just as *Eugenius* had pronounced these Words, the Clock struck Two; upon which he added, turning to *Neander*, you can make no Excuse for refusing

* *Apud posteros vero id Consecutus, ut Cicero jam non Homini, sed Eloquentiæ nomen habeatur. Hunc igitur Speciemus: Hoc propositum nobis sit Exemplum. Ille se profecisse sciat, cui Cicero valde placebit.*

Quintil. Instit. Orat. L. X. C 1.

to dine with me, as the Time is near at Hand, and you informed me before that you are intirely at your own Disposal. *Neander* complied with the Invitation, on Condition that his Friend would accompany him to see the Tragedy of *Hamlet*, which was acted in the Evening, to which he readily agreed.

F I N I S.



